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OUR ADVENTURES

DURING

THE WAR OF 1870.

B. 2578.

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BY

TWO ENGLISHWOMEN:

EMMA MARIA PEARSON,

Authoress of 'From Rome to Mentana,'

AND

LOUISA ELIZABETH MACLAUGHLIN.

'Fields have been sown with blood,
And lust of conquest hath sore reaping time:
The land is desolate till Charity sublime
Pours forth her store of food.'
REV. C. BULLOCK (*Worcester*).

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II.

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OUR ADVENTURES

DURING THE

WAR OF 1870.

CHAPTER I.

'LA BELLE NORMANDIE.'

Our baggage waggons and horses were all duly transferred from the station we arrived at to the station we started from across the river, and here, whilst lounging in the waiting room, we caught sight of a gentleman sitting at a table writing, and he had one of our English brassards on his arms. A courier came in and out, and there was evidently a hitch in their business. Some of our party fell into conversation with him, and his story offered an amusing illustration of the old pro-

verb of sending 'the hook after the hatchet.' The National Society had become aware of sundry boxes and bales dispersed about the country, and had sent out a courier to find them, get them together, and take them on to Versailles. Why, when so much unpaid service was at their command, they preferred to pay hired servants, I do not know. In this case, certainly not because of superior qualification for the work, for the little man could not carry out his directions, and on telegraphing home to the Committee this gentleman was sent out to assist him. The stray baggage had been got together, but fresh difficulties arose. Fearful tales of the depredations committed by Francs-tireurs were flying about, and it appeared that to take baggage intended for the German lines through Normandy was a hazardous proceeding. Fortunately for this gentleman, our Ambulance was a French one, with French Infirmiers, and at that time welcomed everywhere as true to

France, and Dr. Pratt very kindly offered to throw the shelter of his protection over the Captain, the courier, and the baggage, and it was arranged they should go on with us, and at St. Pierre find waggons to take their stores.

We arrived in due time at St. Pierre, found lodging in a small auberge, and prepared for a journey next day that we were assured would be full of danger. As we saw it next morning, St. Pierre is a prettily situated village with rising ground behind it, and stands on the banks of the Seine. Opposite are wooded heights, and the country around was green and fertile. An early start had been arranged, but the Captain had gone off to Louviers, a town about three miles distant, of which St. Pierre-au-Louviers was the railroad station, to find some waggons, and we had to wait for his return.

The people of Louviers must be a hospitable, kind-hearted race, for the evening before,

travelling in the railroad carriage with a lady and gentleman of that place, they had pressed us most earnestly not to remain at St. Pierre, but to go on with them and accept supper, bed, and breakfast, and this simply on the faith of our charitable mission; whilst the Captain met with every assistance, and the Mayor himself lent him a waggon and a splendid pair of heavy Norman cart-horses, that could drag any weight. This and another waggon and horses he found there were duly returned from Versailles.

Whilst waiting for the packing of the baggage on these waggons, it entered into the fertile brain of one of our party to address the gaping villagers who had assembled round the auberge doors in a flowery speech about nothing, which, being delivered in perfect French, with most emphatic action, was irresistibly ludicrous, especially when, pointing to an American banner which was duly displayed out of the window, he declaimed on the reason

of there not being a proper number of stars on the blue square in the corner, and being a Southerner, he declared that a great many stars had withdrawn from the assemblage usually displayed on the banner, being ashamed of their company! On this an elderly and respectable individual, who was listening open-mouthed to this flow of eloquence, or rather 'bunkum,' went off into a state of despair, dashed his hat on the ground, began to run his hands wildly through his hair, as if about to tear it off, and lamented over the ruin and disunion of 'la grande République.' It was some time before we could any of us recover our gravity, and by the time we had done so a start was ordered, and the cortege wound slowly up a lane with deep banks on either side, so like an English lane that it was impossible to fancy we were in France, and so near the seat of war.

At Rouen we had seen crowds of men drilling, dressed in their civilian clothes, the black

coat of the gentleman side by side with the linen blouse of the artisan; but very little progress seemed to have been made in the arming of them, for old flint-lock muskets abounded. Nor was there a general uprising in the outlying villages. Normandy was hardly awake, and everything looked peaceful and dreamy. We reached at last the level plateau above St. Pierre, and joined the route Impériale; and here our light van and store waggons and the gentlemen who were walking came to a stand-still, for the heavily-loaded waggons of the Captain had stuck in the cross lane we had taken out of St. Pierre, and the horses from the last one were obliged to be attached to the front one and drag it uphill, and then being again unharnessed, all four horses returned to the other waggon and brought it up to the road above. 'Most haste, worse speed,' saith an old proverb. Had we taken the route Impériale, a mile longer, but nearly level, we should have avoided the hour's delay which

ensued. Thus we did not make a fair start until 1 P.M. instead of 8 A.M., as originally ordered.

But whilst waiting the arrival of the Captain and his baggage we had various sources of amusement to pass away the time. First, we sat on a green bank, though the wind was cold, and looked across the valley, through which ran the Seine, to the grand old ruins of Château Gaillard, the castle of our lion-hearted king, built in proud defiance of his rival, Philippe-Auguste. It is but a ruin now, the 'Saucy Castle,' as Richard called it, when it frowned down on the sunny valley and lorded it over the silver Seine. It has its legends, too, of fair, frail queens who lived in durance there, and one, Marguerite de Bourbon, the faithless wife of Louis X., ended here her sinful life by the executioner's hands, and here the exiled David Bruce found a shelter when banished from his northern home. Twice the 'Saucy Castle' surrendered

to the foeman, on both occasions from famine, once of food, once of water. Roger de Lacy defended it for six months against the French King, Philippe-Auguste, the partisan of Prince Arthur, when that monarch espoused his cause in opposition to that of King John; and later it held out, garrisoned by only 150 men, against the forces of Henry V.

There is an old well still in the courtyard, from which in those turbulent times water was drawn for the garrison; but the ropes of the bucket were worn out, there were none to replace them, and the brave little band surrendered from thirst, as Roger de Lacy had done from hunger.

We were looking at the ruin, and wondering what fresh scenes of war and tumult would pass under its old walls, when a cry was raised, 'The Francs-tireurs!' We sprang up, somewhat curious to see them. Here they were at last, these dreaded brigands; for as such they had been described to us. Would

they disregard the Red-Cross banner, the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes, and fire upon such a combination of neutrality, or could they see them? To obviate this possibility three of the tallest men were mounted on the roof of the store-waggons and waved the standards conspicuously before the advancing forces, whilst an old peasant we had caught was induced to go back down the high road and explain our pacific character. It is not to be wondered at that these awful preparations alarmed the Francs-tireurs, and they began to ascend the slope in most martial order. They had been marching at ease, that is, straggling all about and picking apples, but they suddenly fell into column and levelled their rifles, then halted and held a military council. The result was, skirmishers were thrown out two and two into the fields each side, whilst others came creeping up the road, darting from tree to tree, till they came near us. It was really very pretty to see, and Louise and myself,

feeling all confidence in our female costume, stood in the road watching the advance. Probably our peaceful looks were reassuring. We did not seem ferocious and had no revolvers, the flags were duly visible, so they became reassured, called in their skirmishers by sound of bugle, and marched at ease up the hill. We spoke with several of them. One poor, footsore fellow pleaded hard for 'a lift,' but it was too dangerous. Had we met any German patrol, to have had a Franc-tireur with us would have been deeply compromising, and we were obliged to refuse.

We soon after started on our way, and at the first village we passed through we overtook them. They had got some hot hard-boiled eggs, with which they presented us, and so terminated our first interview with the dreaded Francs-tireurs. They seemed to us a very superior class of men. In their ranks were several who spoke English very well. Many were landed proprietors, with their ser-

vants, gamekeepers, and foresters. They were well dressed and well armed, and all wore a holly leaf in their caps. We asked the meaning and were told it referred to an old Norman proverb, 'Qui me touche se pique' (who touches me gets pricked); and assuredly they well maintained the motto of the holly leaf. From no class in the whole army did the Germans suffer so much as from the Francs-tireurs, the 'Landsturm' of France.

We slept at Vernon, but here an adventure occurred which might have had serious consequences to two of our party, Mr. Ryan and Mr. Hayden. Mounted on horses as outriders, Dr Pratt sent them forward to order dinner and beds. On coming near the town a party of over-zealous Gardes Mobiles met them, arrested them as Prussian spies, and took them to their barrack. In vain Mr. Hayden pleaded he was a medical student from Paris, even saw one of his own friends in the crowd, a young officer, who bore witness to the truth

of this; nothing would satisfy the Mobiles, some of whom were drunk and all disorderly, and at last they marched their prisoners off, ordering them not to put their hands in their pockets, fearing probably they had revolvers in them, and so took them to the Mairie. Here their passports and papers proved their innocence, and they were released after two hours' annoyance. As we drove into Vernon, we were greeted with the news that two of our party were in prison. However, on arriving at the hotel, we found them there, safe and well, superintending supper, not the worse for their detention.

We saw nothing of this Norman town, which gives its name to a good old English family, as we left early next morning. Here we heard that Dreux was burning. We could not possibly pass that way or by Evreux, so we went on to Mantes. The country about here was lovely. The road wound round a projecting bluff, through which the railroad

runs to the village of Bonnières, a bright, cheerful-looking place with a broad, steep main street, and past Rosny, the birthplace and home of Sully. The château still exists; it was the property of the Duchesse de Berri from 1818 to 1830, but the grounds around it, though well wooded, are very flat, extending down to the river.

We halted for luncheon at a little hamlet, and started about four or five, intending to pass on as far as we could. Mézières would have been our resting-place for the night, but Mézières was a ruin. Near by some Francs-tireurs or Gardes Mobiles had fired on a body of Uhlans with an aim too fatally true, and next day a strong body of Prussians came in and burned the village, and even whilst the few poor, shivering inhabitants who had come back to cower in their roofless dwellings told us the sad tale, the same scene was enacting only fifteen miles away, and the smoke of a burning hamlet was going up on the night

air, to protest in the face of Heaven against war and all its terrors, and against the doctrine that an invaded people must neither practise 'defence nor defiance.'

It was very sad to drive in the deepening twilight through the long street of Mézières, to look at the 'comfortable' houses roofless, windowless, floorless, and blackened by smoke, and to think of the household misery entailed by war; the little details of families ruined and gone out into distant provinces to seek a shelter. Sadder still to see those who remained crouching round a fire made of the half-burned beams of their own roof-trees, despairing and hopeless. What was peace or war to them? They had lost all! No peace could give them back their happy homes, recall their dead from some forgotten trench on a lost battle-field; no war could inflict on them bitterer suffering. And it was the ambition and pride of Emperor and King, whose very faces they had, perhaps, never looked on,

that caused the war; the rifles of men from some other departments, whose acts they had never sanctioned, that had brought death to the Uhlans, and all this misery on themselves. War is very merciless. Soldiers forget they are men, fathers, and sons, and brothers. They lose their individuality, and become one vast machine of evil. We had time enough to think over the 'morality' of war, for in the little village where we halted for the night the beds were not very conducive to sleep.

It was a very little village, named Fling. We occupied all the solitary auberge, but there appeared no place for the horses and waggons. Our admirable avant-courier, however, informed a sub-official whom he found that he must have places for his horses and Infirmiers; if not, the Mayor must be hanged early the next morning, and places were found. We knew it was a joke; but the sub-official was frightened, and the Mayor,

being out of town, was apprised of his danger, and next morning the garrison was called out—two National Guards and a half (that is, a very small youth)—to guard his Worship. We did not see that official, but we left Fling with a splendid reputation for honesty and generosity, for we actually paid our bills—a practice too much neglected by the stronger party in time of war.

We arrived at Mantes about noon, and had time to see the lovely old church of Notre-Dame, and after luncheon went on to St.-Germain. We drove through the town without a halt, for we were getting very near the German outposts, and came out in the road leading to Versailles. At Mantes our chief had 'required' an omnibus; it was useless there, all traffic being stopped, and his men were all footsore. Our cortege was formed as follows:—Two gentlemen on horseback; four Infirmiers marching together, one carrying the Red-Cross flag; a light covered

cart, containing Louise and myself, driven by one of the gentlemen, a Union Jack and a Stars and Stripes on each side of the cart; the store-waggon, driven by Charlie, with Turco John by his side, and a monkey strapped behind. Then the omnibus with the rest of the folks, the Captain's waggon coming last. As we drove out of St. Germain, we emerged on an open road, looking on the left over flat ground, a valley with trees and houses scattered about it, and a huge rock-mound in the distance, crowned by a fortress.

'There is Mont Valérien,' said one of our friends, and we looked at the far-famed fort with great curiosity. Lines of men were manœuvring on the green slope which descended from the fort to the valley, and as we looked we heard a dull report, a white puff of smoke broke out from the fort, a shell came slowly, with a graceful curve, soaring in the air, to fall in a green meadow some five hundred feet short of us. The earth flew up

in a shower, but no further harm ensued. Our driver thought it better, however, to get on, and the fort was soon hid by a wall and a hedge. Still we heard the boom that showed Mont Valérien was at work. Presently we came out again where the road was open to the country round.

We were jogging quietly on, when one of our outriders galloped up and asked me for the pass which I had procured. We had been sent on first because we had it, but no one had asked for it. We had come at a brisk trot through St. Germain. It was dinner-time, and the officials had not descried us; but just as those unlucky waggons of the Captain's were coming in the rear, some zealous captain of the guard descried them, and demanded what permission they had to go to the front. In vain the Captain explained he was an agent of the British National; it was useless, and they had to ride forward for our pass, and we to wait the result—in full view of

Mont Valérien. Presently came another shell, a little nearer, then another nearer still. I requested Louise to emerge from the shelter of the back part of the cart and come and look, but she declared it rained and blew, and Mont Valérien might amuse itself as it liked, and she went on working a red and blue slipper in profound composure. Our driver got nervous, and insisted on driving and getting behind a wall. I declared a little wall was no real protection, and we might as well see what was going on; he preferred the back part of the wall, and there we were placed and had to stay.

I do not for one moment believe Mont Valérien fired at us. There was a sortie from Paris on the side by Bougival. The fort was firing at the Prussians in the fields below, and overshot the mark. As it was, it fell beyond them and short of us, and was very harmless. Shells come comparatively so slowly, that one has time to get over the slight

flutter that the first being under fire causes, and, were it not for the danger and destruction they bring about, would be very pretty to watch.

Presently our rear disentangled itself from the outpost guard and we all went on, but five minutes further another stop occurred. Our driver, anxious to hear what was the matter, left me the reins and walked off. Just as he did so a regiment of Bavarian cavalry came tearing down the road, and our horse, having been in the army himself, showed a most decided inclination to dash after the regiment, and probably involve us in a charge, which, with a cart behind him in which were a goodly amount of bags, saddle-bags, and other small articles, would have been probably more peculiar than successful. Now, it was an awkward position, for this reason. At Sedan, two Infirmiers had been dismissed for dishonesty of the most flagrant description. They had made their

way to Versailles, given a false account of their leaving the Ambulance, and been enlisted by the agents of the British Society. They accompanied Mr. Thomas, one of the surgeons of the Society, to Mantes, and there we had met the party, and Dr. Pratt had identified his old acquaintances. Mr. Thomas had arrested them, with a view of sending them off as soon as he got back to Versailles, and they were being marched along as prisoners in charge of a stalwart Canadian doctor, armed with a blackthorn stick, and competent to manage any two Frenchmen, armed or unarmed. But necessity knows no law. The prisoners were close by, our escorts were not; and though I had aided at Sedan in dismissing them from the Hospital, I was sure they would rescue us, so I swallowed my pride and called out to them. They came instantly to our rescue, and really we were so grateful that, if we could have escaped them on the spot, I almost think we should; as it was, we ob-

tained their release at Versailles. They held well on to the horse's head, and then came another regiment galloping full speed. They turned off just beyond us, down a lane that led into the fields below, but, as we heard afterwards, the skirmish was then over, and the troops we had seen on the green hill-side were retreating into the fort; so our impetuous friends could not have had the chance of charging, and we assuredly preferred keeping on the high road, and not assisting *nolens volens* in such a *mêlée*.

Shortly afterwards we reached Versailles, the only French Ambulance that did so, and were greeted at the door of the Hôtel des Reservoirs by Captain Furley, Mr. Thomas, the Admiral, and many old friends. One word more I must say. To Mr. Thomas's kind care we owed it that we found that we had a most comfortable room in the hotel prepared for us, and the Society may well congratulate themselves on the good services done by this

gentleman, not only to ourselves—that is a minor matter—but to the wounded of both nations. His bright, cheerful intelligence, his unselfishness, his indefatigable labour, will be, we trust, rewarded by some better recognition than these few lines of a woman's praise.

CHAPTER II.

THE KING'S HEAD-QUARTERS.

We had at last arrived at the termination of our wanderings—the King's head-quarters. Here was his Majesty himself, duly installed in the Prefecture; here was the Crown Prince, 'Fritz,' as the French called him, and it may be remarked that he was always spoken of by them almost affectionately, and the name was given in no disrespect, but rather in a kind of strange liking for the man who was said by popular report to pity their nation, to hate the war, and to detest Bismarck. He might possibly be suggested as a ruler for France, and with better chance of success than the distrusted ex-Emperor.

'Fritz is kind,' 'Fritz is a brave soldier,' 'Fritz is a good man,' were common phrases even amongst the wildest of the Zouaves, and his English wife may be proud of her husband's reputation amongst his foes. We speak feelingly ourselves. The Prince may forget an act of kindness shown towards us when we were at Balan; *we* do not. Our General rode over to his camp to report our arrival, and related how we had nothing to eat or drink. The Prince's own luncheon had been but a sparing one, and nothing was left; but he found a stone flask of Curaçoa, and sent it back to us, regretting he had nothing else to offer. It was invaluable. We were faint and hysterical with fasting, and a morsel of bread and a little Curaçoa were the most delicious meal we ever partook of.

Besides these great ones of the earth, there was a swarm of little princelings, and amongst them Leopold of Hohenzollern, the innocent cause of this tremendous war. He was a tall,

slight, intelligent-looking man, and very popular. His appearance was a great contrast to the heavy look and frame of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, Prince Albert's elder brother, and the boyish, weak face of the Grand Duke of Würtemburg. Their lives at Versailles were easy ones. They ate and drank and slept, till reports got abroad that some were sent back to the rear or on to the front, the King wisely thinking them more ornamental than useful in Versailles.

Dr. Pratt occupied himself in trying for the necessary pass to enter Paris, aided by Generals Sheridan and Burnside, and that evening we heard all went well, and we should probably leave for Paris at 3 P.M. next day. We could have no meals in the Hôtel, and were obliged to go out to the Restaurant belonging to it. This was very disagreeable, as it was crowded with German officers, and no other ladies there. However, one of the surgeons escorted us, and the scene was decidedly

amusing. How everybody ate and drank! How iced champagne flew about! And how very small the dinner was! We had some soup and some donkey—it was gelatinous, and more like calves-head than anything else—and some sweets, and we paid the full price of a good dinner.

The next morning, the 13th, at 10 o'clock A.M., we were ordered to meet the Ambulance, and hear the result of Dr. Pratt's request. We were very grieved to find that the prospect of obtaining permission was a very doubtful one. This was awkward. Fully expecting to get leave to go into Paris, Dr. Pratt had brought away no stores. There were plenty in the city; besides, we should not have been allowed to take them in, and the funds were nearly exhausted. It was a question, if we could not go into Paris, if the Ambulance should not be broken up, to be reformed at Tours, within French lines. Dr. Pratt declared that from the neighbourhood of Paris he would not stir, and with the Germans he would not serve,

and that we should pitch tents and live close by till we did get in. During this uncertainty he requested none of us to leave the place, so we gave up a visit to an old friend of Louise's at St. Germain—our principle from first to last having been, in great as well as small things, never to disobey orders.

Instead of that we visited the Château, now turned into a great German Ambulance. There were only a few French in it, but French Sisters were the nurses. Of all the terrible places to be ill in, the Salle des Glaces must have been the worst, where every pale face, every contortion of pain, every action of the sick or the nurses, was repeated over and over again. It made one feverish only to think of it, and to look at the glare of the light as it struck on the mirrors. The polished floors were as slippery as glass, and the whole place, magnificent as it was, had a comfortless air. The pictures had been carefully preserved by boarding them up, but the unused part of

the Palace was still exhibited at certain hours, and the Germans wandered through those grand halls, looking with special interest at the pictures of the victories of the Great Napoleon. There was a long ward down below, full of wounded. There almost all the poor fellows had hospital gangrene.

The Sisters showed us the cooking-place prepared for them to heat their tisanes and plaisters. They were over-worked and badly supplied, and begged us to help them, both personally and with stores; but we told them that Prince Pless had received 20,000*l.* by the hands of Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, from England, only two days before, and surely he could now afford to supply his own great Hospitals handsomely. They only shook their heads, and said that no one thought it would make much difference. It would go to the regimental field hospitals, if to any. That would save the Government paying for them. I asked if she did not think the 20,000*l.* sent into Paris

would do great good. She said, 'In Paris they had plenty of money and stores, and nothing could be bought. The English were very generous; the sum was enormous. She hoped it would do more good than it seemed likely would be done by it.' That 40,000*l.* represents a great amount of self-denial and charity amongst our English households. They have a right to know how it was spent. Has any account been yet sent in from either Government? Will 20,000*l.* be deducted from the war indemnity for *all* expenses demanded by Germany, or will that sum be given to replace furniture ruined in French colleges, convents, and palaces, in nursing German wounded; or will it be given back to England to form the nucleus of some really practical society for Ambulance work amongst our own sick and wounded when next England goes to war? One or the other it ought to be. Let the subscribers look to it.

In the evening several friends paid us a

visit. All hope of getting into Paris seemed over, and we heard we were ordered to Orléans by Prince Pless; but Dr. Pratt still lingered, professing his dislike to working in German lines, and consenting to do so only because advised, first, that by coming to Versailles the Ambulance had fallen under the orders of Prince Pless, and next that a fortnight's work amongst the German wounded would form a fair plea for permission to go into Paris, or, at all events, leave their lines, and the plan was again discussed of breaking up the Ambulance and re-forming it at Tours. Dr. Pratt ordered us to be ready to start with them next day, and ready we accordingly were.

All this time we were constantly meeting the members of the French International, who had a committee-room in the Hôtel des Reservoirs. All were most kind to us, especially M. De la Roche and the Baron des Bussières. But our mainstay was Mr. Furley, who went, as he told us, by the name of 'the Benevolent

Neutral.' If ever we had the right to be proud of a countryman, it was of Mr. Furley. He was a general favourite. Kind, brave, cheerful, unselfish, untiring, peacemaker in general in all little difficulties, Mr. Furley was a sort of patent British Sunshine, quite sufficient to disprove the national French prejudices that we live in a land of fogs, spleen, and suicide.

That evening, as I was hunting for our door-key in the bureau, a very large Prussian officer stopped me, and asked if we belonged to the Anglo-American Ambulance. I said 'Yes.' 'Why are you not off to Orléans?' he said. 'You ought to have gone this afternoon.' I said he had better find Dr. Pratt, I was simply acting under his orders. He grew furious, and said, 'You are under Prince Pless's orders; you must go at 6 A.M. tomorrow.' Here Louise called to Mr. Furley to hear how a Prussian officer could speak to an English lady, and Mr. Furley kindly

stepped forward and said, 'Really, Dr. Pratt had better be spoken to. These ladies are under his command.' The officer pouted, and marched off to see Dr. Pratt. We heard he was a Prince Piegress, or some such name, and always disagreeable after dinner!

We did not start at six next morning, and things were not pleasant. An aide-de-camp brought word that our presence in the town was displeasing to the German authorities, and he requested we would not leave the hotel. This sort of polite imprisonment we quietly declined, and went out to the Château. In the afternoon Colonel Loyd-Lindsay returned from Paris, accompanied by his valet, who was immediately fallen on by the curious, and closely cross-questioned. Whether it is to him that sundry extraordinary tales of the interior of Paris are owing I cannot say; but we were irresistibly reminded of Mickey Free, in Lever's 'Charles

O'Malley,' and the unlucky editor who tried to get the true history of the storming of Badajoz out of that mendacious individual. In short, he related such wonderful tales that the most daring war correspondent durst not transmit them to his editors.

The Colonel requested to see us, and we humbly waited upon him. He spoke very graciously of our past services, and said he should be sorry to see us connected with a failure; that it was evident the Anglo-American Ambulance must go to pieces, and we had better return to England 'to end the first act of the drama.' We were utterly astounded and replied nothing, and he continued: 'This is my advice to you—indeed, I may say even more.' At this crisis he pulled his moustache, and subsided into silence. We meekly asked how and why we should go home, as we had been distinctly ordered to keep with the Ambulance by Captain Brackenbury, who alone on the Continent had power, according to his own

account, to give us orders, and failing him, our commissions ordered us to obey Prince Pless, and his orders were distinctly that we should go to Orléans. He said nothing, only: 'You had better leave to-morrow. You are not being treated as English ladies should be. How will you go?'

'Now, I knew the Colonel was going direct to St. Germain in his carriage, with only his valet, was to sleep there, and go on to Rouen next day. He was going to the very house we should have gone to, the lady being an old friend of Louise's; but I suggested that there was an omnibus went from St. Germain. We had no idea of going in that omnibus, but we wanted to see if he would send two Englishwomen, *alone and unescorted*, a three days' journey through a dangerous country, and through the lines of two armies, when he was going the same road himself. He said he could take us as far as St. Germain, where we should find the omnibus. We bowed ourselves

out, determined not to be beholden to him for even a five miles' lift. We saw Dr. Pratt and Captain Furley about it, who procured us a carriage which cost us 4*l.*

Dr. Pratt was terribly cut up at being sent off to Orléans with very little money and still fewer stores. We said we had been attached to their Ambulance for service by Captain Brackenbury, that we could not imagine we had been brought from Sedan to Versailles only to be sent back as useless, when so much work lay all around, and we were ready to go on. He said that it was evident, unless money could be obtained, the Ambulance must go to pieces. The English Society's Agent, Captain Furley, could only give him 50*l.* Major de Havilland had very few stores in hand, Prince Pless had promised some certainly, and he had procured a waggon and two horses to take them on. But that if we would go to England and try to get the leave to enter Paris, through the interest of Count Bernstorff, Mr. Motley, and Lord Gran-

ville, we should do them real service. If we could get it we could come back direct to Versailles, and send a special messenger on to Orléans to fetch up the Ambulance, as we should have to enter by the way of Versailles. I said, 'But if we cannot get the permission, what then?' He said, 'That first and most of all; try for nothing till all chance of that has failed. If it is impossible, which I won't believe, get money and stores for us; all you can, from all quarters.' He went on to say, 'Unless we get help we must break up. Loyd-Lindsay wanted us to do so here, but we would rather go on to Orléans, and if we must break up do it there.' He added that a fortnight with those Germans would be quite enough, and if the Ambulance was not permitted to pass into French lines in a body, that they could break up, get through one by one, and re-form at Tours. He implored us to do all we could, to write them up in the papers, to defend them if they were attacked. He told us how grieved he was

that we had to go, even if it were on their service, and never by a single word implied that he dispensed with our services then or in the future. He also gave us a written list with the names of all those employed in his Ambulance, and requested us to apply to the British Society to take upon their staff those men who being Americans were borne at present only on the books of the French International.

We were to go to England to do his business and return when it was done, and of this all his staff were as well aware as we were. That evening we met Prince Pless on the stairs. He told us we were to go to Orléans with the Ambulance; that we were sadly needed; that we should be received 'with open arms;' and he sent orders for every attention to be paid to us. It was a sad Sunday next day. We proposed starting at noon to pay a visit to Louise's friend at St. Germain. The Ambulance was also preparing to move off to Orléans, and parting in such troubled

times with friends is always sad and disheartening; but we were delayed, first by the necessity of getting a safe-conduct for the coachman and horses to come back, and next by the marching down the street of a large body of troops from the army around Metz. We could not break their lines, and had to wait. All our old friends crowded round. Mr. Furley took charge of us to the last. Loyd-Lindsay was there, but he either overlooked us or thought he had been bored enough with our Ambulance and us, for he did not even raise his gold-laced cap. Dr. Pratt asked us to walk aside with him. He reiterated his orders, and said he would write down a list of the stores he required, and we could supplement it with anything else we thought of. He fully authorised us to do that. I said when last in England I had seen the warehouse at the back of St. Martin's crowded with stores. They ought to be able to send any quantity. There being no paper near, I handed him my passport, which was bound

up with many vacant leaves, for *visas*, &c., and on one of these leaves he wrote what stores he wished for. I did not notice he had not signed it, nor, I dare say, did he think of that formality. When we left Sedan to ask for leave to go with his Ambulance, he sent no written request for our services. He did not think, evidently, that the Society's Agents would distrust us, and when Mr. Capel remarked upon it I was somewhat surprised. As I have said, the request came by telegraph afterwards.

Louise asked him if he had written to his wife. He said, 'No; I am in such a state of worry and depression, I cannot. Go to her directly you get back, tell her so, and tell her all about us, and see if she cannot help you at the American Embassy. She knows some of the attachés; she must work for us, too, in aiding you.' He then wrote down her address, and requested us to telegraph or write any news, and to do all as quickly as possible, for their money was falling short. His last

words were: 'Remember, first of all, leave to enter Paris; failing that, money and stores, to get out into French lines, and get our men put on the English staff.' Thus it is most clear to all we came back his authorised agents, and we were further assured, not only by himself but by all his staff, that they expected to see us back as soon as we had got one or other of what they required.

We shook hands; neither party could say good-bye. We did not dream how we should meet again. It was fortunate that at that instant, as we re-crossed the street to get into our carriage, a ludicrous circumstance diverted us. There stood the waggon and horses ready for Prince Pless's stores, and up came the messenger bringing them. It was not a princely gift. It did not cost much of the 20,000*l.* given only the day before to buy it. It consisted of two phials, each containing about a couple of ounces, one of opium and one of morphia, and a small box of quinine powders. As an able-bodied child of three

would not have been inconvenienced by the weight, it is needless to remark that the waggon was discharged as useless.

At last we were off, the farewell being from all: 'It is not good-bye—*au revoir*;' and the final injunction: 'Write us up in the papers.' We had delayed too late to stay at Miss T——'s at St. Germain, very much to our disappointment, so we drove through to Mantes. Captain Furley had asked us to take back upon our box the coachman of the omnibus our Ambulance had 'required' at Mantes, and to give him the advantage of our safe-conduct. Both he and the driver suffered dreadfully from fear of the Prussians, but no one interfered with us till we were far through St. Germain. The coachman had just turned round and exclaimed, 'We are saved,' when up rode a body of Uhlans. The officer presented himself at the carriage, and politely asked us whence we came and where we were going. We informed him, from Versailles to

England, and produced our pass. He at first declined to look at it, seeing we were only two women; but we insisted upon it. He returned it with the politest of bows, remarked that he wished us a pleasant journey, but he was afraid it was going to rain, and once more bowing rode off.

We never in any journey experienced the least trouble or delay, except such as was unavoidable from detention of trains and difficulty of finding means of carriage. From everyone, high and low, French and German, we received all the kindness and assistance possible. No disagreeable adventures ever marred those interesting drives through the invaded country. Uhlan and Franc-tireur alike were guards and friends, not savage foes or impertinent enquirers. Whether this was owing to our diplomacy or the absence of the opposite sex, we know not; but the advice we should give, founded on practical experience, is: 'Ladies, when you travel abroad,

especially in war, leave the men at home.' If you have husbands, of course they must go with you, and it will be your bounden duty to look after them; but then domestic duties may probably keep you at home. It is only those who have none who should risk life and health amidst such scenes as it was our duty to go through; and then, with no baggage, a knowledge of the language, good temper and forbearance, energy and determination, there are no difficulties that any woman cannot get easily through. On the whole, we had every reason to congratulate ourselves that our gallant countryman had not offered us seats in his carriage or his valuable escort.

We reached England three days before he did, owing to his being detained at Havre by a storm in the Channel, which began to howl around our steamer as she dashed into Dover harbour, the last mail-boat that crossed for twenty-four hours. But this is somewhat anticipating our progress.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE-FIELD AT HOME.

BETWEEN St. Germain and Mantes we halted at a little village, where the Curé, whom we had seen on our way to Versailles, greeted us, condoled with us on our disappointment in not entering Paris, and chatted pleasantly whilst the horses were resting. He told us Gambetta had issued a proclamation calling on everybody to fight. Why did he not fight himself? Why did not Trochu fight his way out, instead of waiting for other people to fight their way in? 'But,' he added, 'this is the doctrine which is the ruin of France. This is the doctrine which prevents my writing proudly on my forehead the name of French-

man; "la doctrine des autres," let others do this, let others do that. Why not do it themselves? It is so all through; the doctrine "des autres" is our ruin.' It was too true; we had seen it too often, that breaking down under pressure of circumstances, that helpless dependence on others in the hour of difficulty. Always 'les autres.'

Apropos of this, he related a most amusing anecdote of the ladies of St. Germain. When the entrance of the King into that town was announced, these patriotic ladies held a meeting, and resolved, as they could not prevent his coming in, they would insult him when he did, and it was determined to spit upon him as he passed. The gentlemen, hearing of this, consulted together how to prevent so foolish a proceeding, and arriving at the place of meeting, one deputed by the rest addressed the ladies in a most pathetic speech, declaring that they, the cherished and beloved, should not incur the risk of savage punishment for

such a deed, for their husbands, fathers, and brothers, would take upon themselves the act and its consequences, and he, the speaker, would be the first to insult the invader in the proposed manner, even if he perished in the attempt. At this one of the ladies rushed forward, exclaiming, 'Not you, my husband, not you; let some other do it. C'est pour un autre!' Out stepped another volunteer, but again his loving wife forbade him: 'Not you, my cherished, not you; un autre!' till the plan was given up by universal consent, and the King made his entry without meeting with any insult from 'les autres.'

We slept at Mantes. Our host was inconsolable for the loss of his omnibus, and would not believe in its possible restoration after the war. One of our surgeons had left his watch there, and we claimed it. Mine host refused to part with it, alleging that three sacks, which had contained forage, had not been returned with the rest. We remonstrated

that the sacks were worthless and the watch valuable; all in vain. We therefore walked off to find the Maire, who was sitting in council as to the means of defending the place. Things were changed since we had passed; it was now full of Francs-tireurs and Gardes Mobiles. The Maire most politely left the Committee of Defence and came with us to the innkeeper. A long discussion ensued; the value of the sacks was declared to be six francs and a half. The Maire justly represented that, if the Prussians came by that way, three francs and a half would by no means represent his probable losses. At last, failing to convince the good man that he had no reason to complain in such times of the loss of three old sacks, and no right to detain Dr. May's watch for a debt of Captain F——'s, he gave it up, and said, 'Well, Monsieur, your conduct is inexplicable and unjustifiable towards strangers, who have done so much for our wounded; but it shall not be the cause of

detention to these amiable ladies. They shall have the watch, and the Commune will pay you the three francs and a half.' Thus all was pacifically settled, and we left Mantes bearing off the missing property. We earnestly hope that when the Prussians did come—for come they did, in spite of the Mayor and the Committee of Defence—and when the heavy requisitions were made on the town, and the officers ate and drank of mine host's best, and ignored his bill, that he was struck with a sense of remorse for the little sum so unjustly and pertinaciously claimed, and felt it a righteous retribution.

We lunched at Vernon, and mourned over the destruction of the splendid railway-bridge. It took three years to build, three hours to destroy, and it was such useless destruction, for the Prussians walked over Normandy and into Rouen in utter disregard of broken bridges and cut-up roads. Just beyond Vernon we came to a specimen of this fact.

Across the broad road was a large barricade, with a deep trench in front; only one small passage was left at the side for traffic, and that was blocked up by an overturned cart. Francs-tireurs were ambushed in the wood and farm buildings at the side. But whilst we were wondering how to pass, a boy in a country blouse, but with a pair of military trousers, suddenly appeared, and lifted the cart aside. We thanked him and passed on, and that barricade was never used. But the adventures and misfortunes of the War Office Ambulance, on the same road, proved the truth of what we were led to suspect—that they were expected, and would not pass as scot-free as we did. The mark of suspicion was on them. They were going to Versailles to work in German lines, and the country people bore them no good-will.

We reached St. Pierre-au-Louviers, and our old hostess received us with open arms; but the quiet village was changed now. A troop of mounted gendarmes were halting

there. The roads were being barricaded, the bridge over the Seine mined, and the landlady's son had been called out in the last reserve. His state of utter despair was ludicrous. He put every dish he did not forget on the table with a deep sigh, and assured us he was quite 'discomposed.' His mother came in, and, pointing to him, begged us to observe what a hero he looked. 'Regard him, then, ladies; has he not the air of a grand captain?' We laughed and sympathised; it was all we could do.

At the station we found a guard of French soldiers of the line, armed, the first we had seen for many a long day. They all came forward to help us, and we were escorted into the train by a dear old sergeant, who seemed to think it his duty to take care of us.

We reached Rouen that night, and found the Hôtel d'Angleterre in possession of the War Office Ambulance. The chiefs were dining in a private room, and the Infirmiers

and grooms in the salle-à-manger. They had just finished, and we were very glad, as they were a noisy lot. We sent off a telegram for one of the London papers, and, finding it was for one of French sympathies, it reached safely. We sent to tell Lord Bury we were there, just arrived from Versailles; and as I had known him when he was but a little boy, and we were from the same county, I thought he might be glad to see us, and we had several valuable hints we could have given him. However, the *garçon* returned, and said, 'my lord was at dinner;' and though we did not leave till ten or eleven next day, he never asked to see us, so our information remained untold. We had no wish to intrude upon him, but it was a pity; for had they known, as we did, the feeling up the road, they would not have risked going on, as they did. Mr. Thomas, in a letter dated November 17, and published in the 'Times,' gives an account of the loss of waggons, and stores, on that very

route, three weeks later, intended for their use at Versailles; and all along, from the first report of their coming, the very fact of so large an Ambulance going into German lines was a cause of suspicion and distrust among the country people. Even on this occasion we should not have been surprised to hear they had lost their horses. The Francs-tireurs were on the sharp look-out for these at least, and we had been asked at Mantes, Vernon, and St. Pierre-au-Louviers when they were coming. We did not know. We had not even heard if the Ambulance had left England, only that it was expected at Versailles, so we were in ignorance; and, had we known, we assuredly should not have betrayed our countrymen. But we were only women, we were supposed to be friendly, and we picked up a good deal as we came along. Whatever we knew or did not know, we could not converse upon it with the class of men, however respectable, who sat round

the long table of the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and our attempt to see the chief failed.

Failing Lord Bury, we tried to see Dr. Guy. He was at breakfast, and we were told could not be disturbed; so we felt we had done our duty. We could not lose the train, and we hoped they could take care of themselves; but we did hear in London they had lost their horses on that very journey, and we simply remarked, 'We could have told them so.'

From Rouen to Amiens and Calais all was plain sailing, and we crossed by the night-boat, had a very bad passage, and reached London, several hours late, on the 19th of October. All that day, after we recovered from the effects of our voyage, which was not till late, we passed in going to see Mrs. Pratt and Mr. Motley. This eminent statesman received us with his own peculiar courtesy, and promised to aid us by himself speaking to Count Bernstorff, begging us to call there the next morning. We saw the principal

members of the Ladies' Committee for the Relief of French Distress. All gave us hearty welcome and every help in their power. Till we had seen what chance there was of obtaining the desired leave, we had nothing to ask from any committee, for money and stores awaited us in Paris. However, next day we communicated with Messrs. Piesse and Lubin and Mr. Rimmel, the active members of two French committees, as to what aid they could give, if required. Were we to try and express our sense of all the kindness we received, we should fail. Only those working as hard as we were know what a blessing a little sympathy is.

We then called at the Prussian Embassy. Mr. Motley was there; but no words of ours are needed to prove how good and true and kind, to friend and foe alike, are Count and Countess Bernstorff. The Count said Mr. Motley had well pleaded our cause, and he would do what he could. Quite delighted at

this prospect of success, and the warm interest taken in the matter by Mr. Motley and Count Bernstorff, we drove off to a telegraph office, were assured we could telegraph to Orleans, through the British Embassy at Tours, and accordingly sent one off, pleasing ourselves with the idea what a relief it would be to Dr. Pratt. In this very telegram, too, we told him we had a hope of money and stores, if this failed. Thus no step of our progress was intentionally concealed from him, and we knew we had his sanction to use our own judgment in all we did. We wrote that night also to him and to the Secretary of our British Committee, to say we had been detained too late that day to call, as we had hoped to do, in St. Martin's Place, but should be there next morning. I got a private note from one of the officials begging me to do so, as they were affronted we had not been there before, and an anonymous scrap also from the office, begging me 'to go there directly, there was something up.' What, we could not

imagine ; and next day, accompanied by the Rev. Hubert MacLaughlin, Louise's father, we went down.

Captain Burgess received us with a warm welcome, and expressed no surprise we had not been there before. At this time Colonel Loyd-Lindsay had not returned. I told Captain Burgess what our business in London was, and what steps we had taken—this in public, before several of the clerks, and we both also said we would not take up their time, as we had nothing to ask till we received a reply as to Paris. He said, 'They won't let you go in.' We said, 'Then we will come and bother you for money and stores.' His answer was, 'I will do what I can for you,' and he himself was most friendly. I also gave him Dr. Pratt's list of the Ambulance, and begged him to submit that request to the Committee. He said he would, but that he did not think they would take those gentlemen upon their staff. On this occasion, too, we saw several of the ladies, wearing gold

lockets with a white enamel shield and a Red Cross upon them, and, to our surprise, were each presented with one. We have heard since that some of those who had picked *charpie* had silver medals with a Red Cross sent to them, a distinction in this case somewhat cheaply earned.

Next day I sent for some money (33*l.*) which the Committee owed me, with a full account of how it had been expended. I was answered that the account should be submitted to the committee, and in the evening came a letter to say it was correct, and how did I wish the money to be paid? As we were going to see the Committee again, I waited to receive it till I did so. The following evening came a letter from Countess Bernstorff, saying that the National Society did not express the wish we should enter Paris, and therefore, as it was an application that could only be made under special circumstances, in this instance it could not be done; but she told us further that the Bishop of Orleans had applied for assistance,

and we should find 'full scope there for our devotion to the sick and wounded.'

Nothing could be more graceful and generous than this asking help for a French bishop. Now it became our duty to seek for money and stores, and Louise and myself went down to St. Martin's Lane. Captain Burgess was there, so were Lord Shaftesbury and Colonel Loyd-Lindsay; but though we particularly asked to see them, Captain Burgess did not attempt even to mention the fact of our presence there to them, and Colonel Loyd-Lindsay brushed against us as he passed out of the room without taking the slightest notice of us. I asked first for my money; but the account had got into some pigeon-hole, and the affair could not be settled then. We asked for assistance for Dr. Pratt, and Captain Burgess replied, 'It is utterly useless; the Committee will not give it.' I asked why? what had the Ambulance done that the Society would not support it? Captain Burgess replied, 'Simply, they have struck the American

Ambulance off the list of those they intend to supplement.' Louise asked why they had done this? Captain Burgess answered, 'Oh! there is no reason, only they cannot support all. They have a right to choose which they will support, and as regards the request to put their men on our list, they will not do it.' I said, 'Have you asked them?' He replied, 'Yes, and they have refused.' I said, 'At least, you will give them some stores. Here is the list of those which Dr. Pratt requested me to ask for,' showing him my pocket book. He said, 'We are not aware you are authorised to act for Dr. Pratt.' I was utterly astounded, and so was Louise, and we said, 'Do you think we should come here and say so, if we were not authorised?' Captain Burgess said, 'But we don't officially know you are in London!'

This was startling. Can anybody write an essay on how to make your presence officially known, except by going down to an office in the very dress we had been ordered to wear, and announcing ourselves as come to see the

Committee on business, and having already had official communications addressed to my lodgings in London as regarded the debt they owed me. I laughed and said, 'Well, here we are, and here is the list;' and I explained how and when it had been given me. He looked at it and said, 'How do we know this is Dr. Pratt's handwriting?' I answered, 'Look at the page by the side of the list. There is his wife's address in London, written in the same hand.' Captain Burgess said again, 'But we don't know that it is any of it in his handwriting.'

Then indeed, I confess, my blood was up. I had worked with Captain Burgess and Captain Furley in getting up the Society before Colonel Loyd-Lindsay joined it. We had both served them faithfully, and this was a cruel insult. I said, 'Good heavens! Captain Burgess, do you mean to say we should come here asking for money under false pretences, with a forged list of stores?' He made no answer. I took my brassard out of my pocket and said, 'Take back

this brassard, which has never been a protection or an honour, for we were obliged to leave it off at Versailles. If I could do this thing, I am not worthy to work under your Society. If you have accused me falsely, you are not worthy I should work under you.' He refused to take it, saying, 'Oh, that is all nonsense.'

Angry as I was, I would not lose a chance of helping our Ambulance, and I said, 'If you doubt me, will you give Dr. Pratt something if he comes himself to ask for it, Captain Burgess?' 'Not even if he comes himself,' he answered. I remarked, 'Well, it is all very extraordinary. Will you submit it to the Committee, at least?' He said, 'Yes, I will; but it will be of no use.' I said, 'I shall call to-morrow for an answer;' and we left, feeling we had been treated in a most unworthy way, grumbling about red tape and the state of things in general of the Committee, as women will, especially when chafing under such absurd and uncalled-for injustice. 'But kinder friends, more trusting hearts, awaited

us. The good people of Putney gave us all the stores they had collected since they had sent out to Sedan, and all the balance of the money in hand, 40*l.*—this for the use of any Ambulance we might work with, as they had heard of such quantities of stores getting ruined by damp in the vaults of St. Martin's Church, such waste of money in St. Martin's Place, that they preferred giving to those who would put to practical and instant use all that was sent.

From the Committee in Red Lion Square, from Mr. Von Glehn in the City, from the Hon. Miss Rushout of Onslow Square, from Lady Theodore Grosvenor, from the ample stores of Messrs. Piesse and Lubin, from Mr. Edward Walford, and the local Committee at Hampstead, came help in new and valuable clothing, lint, wadding, and medicines; 30*l.* of the Putney money we spent in medical necessaries; and Louise's experience in hospital training, the judicious selection she made, and the trouble she took in going to

purchase them from the Civil Service Stores in the City at less than half-price, placed us in possession of what would have cost the Committee probably something like 100*l.* Messrs. Piesse and Lubin gave us a case of amputation instruments especially for the Anglo-American Ambulance, the only thing so especially given for them, except the splendid donation of the French Committee in the City, the secretary of which is M. Pierrard, who gave 200*l.* for the Anglo-Americans, *solely* on condition that it should be used for French wounded alone, and through the kind interest and introduction of M. Eugène Rimmel.

We wrote an appeal to the public for assistance, as we had been requested, but deferred inserting it till we had received the National Society's decided reply. We worked hard all day, and next morning went for the Committee's answer. Captain Burgess said, 'It has not come on for consideration yet.' I said we had already received promises of help,

and we should start for Orléans as soon as possible. That we were also requested to form an Ambulance near Angers, but of course should keep our promise, and take to Dr. Pratt whatever we could procure for him. We both added that we presumed that, as Captain Brackenbury had attached us for service to them, the Committee would sanction our continuing to work with them. Captain Burgess said, 'Oh yes, of course; I don't see why not.' I said, 'You will kindly, then, see for our free passes to Dover.' He said, 'You shall have them. When do you think of going?' Louise answered, 'As soon as we collect our bales and boxes and get off. There is no time to lose. There will be hot fighting round Orleans.' I said, 'I'll send for my money.' Captain Burgess replied, 'Oh, that account has passed the Committee; you shall have it,' and we left.

That evening I received a letter saying the Committee declined to support the Ambulance. I wrote a remonstrance on the in-

justice of this, and begged them to reconsider their decision before I appealed to the public. The answer to this was a letter dismissing me from the Society, signed by Captain Burgess, and saying, 'I am directed by the Committee to request you will consider yourself as released from your allegiance to the Society;' no reason being given. This I declined, as he had refused to accept my resignation. Louise then wrote and asked for her free pass to Dover, and she got an answer, saying it was not necessary for her to proceed in the Society's service again abroad. Now, we had signed a formidable legal document by which our services were engaged for the whole of the war, our daily personal expenses being paid, so that we were advised that neither party could dissolve the engagement without mutual consent. I then received a letter more civilly worded, saying, 'they were not prepared to discuss the legal terms of their contract; they

would pay the money I was owed when it was sent for;' and we hoped the matter was ended.

On the 2nd of November, Captain MacLaughlin, R.A:, called to say we were about to start, and to try and make some terms with them. He took with him the copy of the appeal about to be inserted in the papers, and urged them to send a sum of money for the Ambulance, and so end the discussion. By this time Mrs. Pratt had identified her husband's handwriting, and acknowledged it, by bringing us to take to him one article he had asked for on the list, a large American flag. So there could be no pretext for disavowing it. All was vain, and Captain MacLaughlin returned, saying that they were obstinately determined to refuse.

We wrote to the President, the Prince of Wales, explaining the position of affairs—a letter which we heard long afterwards was forwarded at his desire to the Committee—and having sent off the appeal to be inserted

in the papers, we prepared for our start. We bought a large Union-Jack—how useful it was afterwards the sequel will show. The Committee would not even give us that, and on the 3rd of November all was ready; the heavy baggage, twenty-three bales and boxes, at Charing Cross, ready to go by the 6 P.M. train, and our farewells said to all who had so nobly aided our struggle for the Ambulance. At 1 P.M., having no time to go myself, I sent Mr. Francis Hartley for my money, with a properly-signed receipt for the Committee. He was detained three hours, and at 4 P.M. returned with no money, but a note from Colonel Loyd-Lindsay himself, in part of which he said, 'If you will only give me your assurance that you are not going to Orléans to join the Anglo-American Ambulance, I will submit your letter to the Committee'—what letter I know not, as every letter I had written had been addressed to the Committee, and surely should

have been submitted to them before any replies were sent. My account had passed and the order had been given to pay me, so it could not be that. It must have been the final remonstrance I wrote against our being virtually accused of having asked for money under false pretences. This was addressed, as I have said, to the Committee, and should have been laid before them, without trying to make me give any promise or enter into any arrangement with the chairman.

I sent Mr. Francis Hartley again to ask for my money. The Rev. Randolph MacLaughlin went with him, and we drove to the Charing Cross Station to register our baggage. The gentlemen came back; they could not get the money, and at 5·30 P.M. I went myself with Mr. MacLaughlin. I saw Captain Burgess. He said it was too late; Colonel Loyd-Lindsay was gone, and had left no cheque. At that instant I caught sight of the Colonel going down a

staircase. I ran after him; but he was too quick for me, and vanished. I told Captain Burgess I thought they had all behaved very badly, but I shook hands with him, and said I knew and felt we were going to do better work than ever we had done or could do under them; and so we parted.

I saved the train by a few minutes, and left injunctions with Mr. Hartley to get the money and send it after me to Tours. What passed after we left seems to be that they gave endless trouble, and refused to pay the money unless my solicitor would give them an acquittance for anything else they might owe me. This he was not empowered to do, and represented that it had nothing to do with the debt I claimed. Captain Burgess spoke very hastily on several occasions to Mr. Francis Hartley, so much so that at last my solicitor went himself, and in Captain Burgess's presence told Colonel Loyd-Lindsay that Mr. Hartley was a young gentleman of as

good birth and education as any of them then there, and that he had been treated with 'very scant courtesy.' Colonel Loyd-Lindsay was civil, and said he was sure Captain Burgess did not mean to be insulting, and he had a cheque ready for my solicitor. It is a pity it was not given without all this trouble. Captain Burgess excused himself by saying he had only received 'a vague request for payment.' This, after his own statement that the accounts had passed the Committee, and having had a stamped receipt sent by the hand of an articled clerk, with written authority to receive the sum for me, was but a poor excuse. However, there *that* matter ended, though the delay rendered the money useless to me till after the armistice was declared, and cost me a perilous journey to Bourges to try and cash the cheque which was sent about a fortnight after I reached Orléans.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARMY OF THE LOIRE.

THE train rushed out of Charing Cross Station; the glaring lights faded into darkness. We were off to the help of those who so sorely needed it, alone and unaided, save by God and our own hearts. No doubt of success crossed our minds. We went in a cause too sacred for human prejudice and error to risk its failure, and, cost what it might, we resolved to reach Orléans with the money and stores. How thankful we dreamed they would be to see us—those who had sent us for the help we were bringing. They could leave the German lines; they could go where their own Society sent them. The British National Society had

cast them off. Well, we could do without that Society now; and so, in simple truth and honour, we went back to the friends we had left on that sad day at Versailles.

The tide was so low when we reached Calais that the heavy baggage could not be landed, and we had to wait till noon. We procured a sealed waggon, registered the baggage straight through to Rouen, and met with the greatest kindness and consideration from everyone. We arrived at Rouen at 6 P.M., and leaving our waggon at the station, drove to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and were warmly welcomed. We stumbled over two triangular tin boxes in the hall, and on them read the names of two English military officers. It turned out they were military commissioners sent out to join the Army of the Loire, and going on as we were next day, as far as they could—the termination of all journeys in those times.

We had just read a very amusing article in

one of the daily papers, entitled 'In search of the Army of the Loire,' or something very like it; and we wondered if these gentlemen would be more fortunate than the unlucky special correspondent. All the way from Calais we had heard of the Army of the North, but where was the Army of the Loire? We had seen the railway stations fortified, the walls of the engine-houses crenelled for musketry, and the windows of the waiting-rooms tightly closed up with planks; everywhere men drilling, and beginning to clothe themselves in military costume. Some had caps, some belts, some red stripes down their trousers; but everyone had something to show he was going to be a soldier. On every blank wall, in town and village, were placards calling the people to rise *en masse* and drive out 'the invading hordes of the Goths.' Rouen was no exception to this; but we noticed a vast improvement in the National Guards and Mobiles. One fortnight had

given them much of the appearance of regular troops, and all were now armed.

Our heavy baggage, about four thousand pounds' weight, was brought across the city in a two-horse waggon, and safely got into the train. We procured another sealed waggon, and registered it through to Tours. As far as Rouen the baggage had come free, but here we found we must pay for it; but only quarter tariff, if we could procure an order from the office of the French International Society. It was too late to do that, and the station-master most kindly gave us a little note to pass the baggage on to Tours, and pay there when we had got an order.

We reached Le Mans very late at night, the detentions on the road being numerous. It was very quiet and silent; not a vestige of even a sentinel to be seen, but at daybreak drums and trumpets announced the presence of soldiers. We looked out; the scene was most picturesque. Men in every variety of

uniform were crowding the streets, conspicuous among them the grey and red of the Pontifical Zouaves. It was Sunday; but there was no regular church parade. The Cathedral, however, was full of kneeling worshippers, soldiers greatly predominating; and there the Pontifical Zouave and the Garibaldian volunteer, the Breton peasant and the long-descended Franc-tireur captain of La Vendée, prayed side by side for their well-beloved and suffering France.

On the Boulevard by the Cathedral we met a body of small, active men, with bronzed complexions and brown cloth blouses, fastened in round the waist by a strong untanned leather belt. They wrapped their short hooded capes about them, and shivered in the faint winter sunlight. I asked them where they came from, and they told me from Algiers, from the French colonies there, to fight for the dear mother country. 'We have crossed the sea, Madame,' said one of their sergeants, 'we have marched on foot from Marseilles, and we are

going to Berlin.' He said it so gravely and simply that it was quite touching. The sons of these Algerian farmers may some day pass through Le Mans to Berlin; but of these poor fellows too many fill soldiers' graves on the battle-fields of the Loire.

But strange and most appropriate was the parade-ground of the Francs-tireurs of Cathelineau. It was on the old Place Vianme. There, where Cathelineau fell in the moment of victory, fighting for the Bourbons; there, where his Vendeans, despairing and dismayed at their leader's fall, retreated from the position they had won, the grandson of the dead hero, the General Cathelineau of to-day, mustered around him the descendants of the men who had fought and fell on that very spot, on that fatal day, to march again against a foe. The Fleur-de-lis, and the white cockade, were replaced by the Tricolor, but the enemy now was a foreign invader, and royalist and republican could fight side by side in this

common cause. Their dress was perfect for irregular troops. The men wore black cloth tunics and trousers bound with blue, blue scarfs around the waist, and black slouching hats, with a raven's plume fastened by a small tricolor cockade. The officers wore their scarfs over the shoulder, and had high boots and black gauntlet gloves. The rank was marked by a small gold star, embroidered on the sleeve, one, two, or three, as depended on the rank. Both officers and men were of a very superior class.

They were accompanied by a small, well-organised regimental Ambulance, under the management of Madame Cathelineau. She had a husband and two sons in the corps, and many, very many, friends and neighbours, and with two other Vendean ladies she followed the regiment in a carriage, accompanied by a couple of light store-waggons, to be at hand to nurse the wounded of the corps, in case of need. It was quite a model little Ambulance,

just what an Ambulance should be—the nucleus of work able to be expanded to any extent that occasion may require. One thing struck us as peculiar and beautiful—the deeply religious tone of the whole corps. English people, not considering the intense innate faith of the Breton nature in 'things unseen,' might have considered it superstitious to wear, as they all did, a crimson heart, embroidered on black cloth, and attached to the tunic, with the words written below it, 'Arrête! le cœur de Jésus est ici.' Perhaps it was so; but the idea that the presence of the Saviour in the heart of the soldier would turn aside the balls and be his shield in the hour of danger is, after all, a very beautiful one, and that was but the outward expression of that ideal. Every good man has the same belief in Divine protection; and this was only their simple way of evidencing their trust in Him who 'could cover their head in the day of battle.'

Interesting as Le Mans was, we could not

linger there, and that afternoon reached Tours. Here we had to halt, waiting for the letters of crędit which were to meet us there. Besides, the railroad only 'circulated,' as the French call going on a straight road, as far as Blois, and how to proceed was a difficulty; for beyond were the Prussians, and the proprietors of horses and waggons did not care to take them into German lines, at the risk of having them 'required' for the service of the German army.

We decided, however, that we would go to Blois, leave our baggage there, and get on into Orléans ourselves. As far as the German outposts at Beaugency we could get some sort of conveyance, and then there would be a walk of nine miles. This could be done in three or four hours. We should find the Anglo-American Ambulance there, and their waggons could come up to Blois for the stores. This plan was, however, disarranged by rumours of fighting round Orléans. If this were true, and

the Germans pushed on to Blois, the baggage would not be safe there during the combat. We would wait a day and see. All that day came different rumours of victory and defeat, but night closed in without any decided intelligence. Next morning, however, a general air of hilarity pervaded high and low. Bavarian and Prussian prisoners were brought in, and everyone started up from the *table d'hôte* breakfast to look at such an unaccustomed sight. At last came the despatch affixed to the walls and read by joyous crowds. Von der Tann had been defeated with loss and the French were in Orléans, the first to enter being part of the Cathelineau corps which had preceded the division we saw at Le Mans to the front. The Army of the Loire was found, and its first public appearance had been a glorious success.

Tours was a gay city that day. The Rue Royale was a mass of soldiers of the line, Gardes Mobiles and Francs-tireurs all mixed

together. Thousands passed up and down it with a light step and a cheerful air. Victory had dawned at last upon the arms of France. As I watched the thronging multitude, I regretted the strictly military costume of our volunteers. These men were so simply and cheaply dressed; their tunics sat so loosely and easily; all was for service, not show. Yet many preserved some trace of the peculiar costume of their various provinces. The Francs-tireurs from the Pyrenees wore the flat woollen berretta and white tassel still used by the peasantry there; and the men from Brittany and La Vendée had the half-Tyrolese hat and cock's plume of their native woodland country. One corps was dressed in black velvet, with a violet scarf round the waist.

We derived much amusement from hearing that a friend had been offered some stray boxes belonging to the British National Society. This had been our lot. We might have accumulated a good deal of bag-

gage at various stations all along the road from Calais to Le Mans, which was lying about at the various railroad stations. A good deal of it was addressed to a Colonel Cox. I wonder if he ever got it. One box at Le Mans looked most tempting. It seemed to be a case of instruments, and we had none for ourselves. At Vernon some baggage, sent there *en route* to Versailles, had been burned when the Prussians made their first raid upon the town, and the station caught fire; and really it would hardly have been a sin, on the speculation that some such event might occur here before the Colonel claimed his box—and it had been lying there a long time—to have *borrowed* it or 'required' it till the end of the war. But we left it there, and only hope all the stray packages got somewhere at last where their contents would be useful.

Next day we went on to Blois; our baggage was to follow by the first train that came through. M. de Villeneuve, of the

French International, had been himself to Orléans, and ascertained that the traffic on the line would be resumed as soon as the bridge at Beaugency was repaired, and the workmen were there already, so that we should get it into Orléans as soon as if we took it on by road. Blois was quiet; neither French nor German armies had passed there. It was very interesting to see the grand old Castle prepared to receive the wounded. It could accommodate 600. In the great Council Hall there were 80 beds, but at present all were empty. At Tours we had also seen the old Castle of Plessis-le-Tours making ready for an Ambulance. It was not only that they had space in these places for wounded, but it was supposed to be a means of securing them from occupation by the Germans. In many instances it failed, but the Château de Blois does not appear to have been suffered, and Plessis-le-Tours was but an empty, half-ruined, half-restored house.

It was only on the afternoon of the next day that trains began to run through to Orléans. The first was a special, containing M. Gambetta and two or three of his ministers; the second, a few hours later, a train of ammunition and forage; but there was no hope of passenger trains for several days. We had made acquaintance, fortunately, with a very civil Intendant militaire, whose duty it was to arrange the military traffic, and he, when we had explained our great wish to get into Orléans, said at once that being on such an errand gave us the full right to go on, if possible, and he would apply to the station-master to put on one passenger-carriage. The station-master refused; nothing would induce him to help anybody in any way. The Intendant had no power to force him to give us the accommodation of a carriage, but took down his name, to make a formal complaint of his conduct to the directors, and himself helped to get us into a baggage-waggon, which was the best thing he could do for us.

A wounded officer going to an Ambulance at Orléans, a surgeon on the way to join his regiment, and two or three workmen, who got out at various places on the line, composed the party. When we came near Beaugency the guard showed us a ruined windmill. The story of it was that it had been used as a signal-post by the Prussians; the turning of the mill-sails one way warned their outposts of the presence of the French in force, whilst when they turned the other it was safe for the Uhlans to advance. A party of ingenious Francs-tireurs, perceiving some connection between the action of the mill-sails and that of the Prussian cavalry, took possession of the mill, found that the millers were Prussian soldiers, and having dispossessed them of their situations (how, the relater knew not, whether as prisoners or dead), they resolved to try the effect of working the mill-sails their own way. They turned them in the direction that betokened safety, and a cavalry

picquet of some forty or fifty White Cuirassiers came riding up the road. A volley was fired from behind the hedges which bordered the way, with such fatal precision that they left twenty-one dead on the spot.

The bridge over which we passed, by a temporary and apparently not very safe wooden flooring, had been completely destroyed; the centre arch had been blown up and left a yawning chasm, rather terrible to look at from the frail platform over which we were passing. The peasants pointed out as we went on to Meung, or more properly Mehun-sur-Loire, the distant country where far away on our left the battle had been fought at 'a village called Coulmiers.' We did not think then how that name would represent the solitary great victory of France. All was hope and exultation. The army of the Loire was in Orléans. Had we not seen its divisions at Le Mans and Tours, all well armed, all ready to fight to the death for France? A few days

more, and they would advance on Paris. There would be a grand sortie, and Paris would be relieved before that *coquin* 'Frederick Charles' could arrive; and if he did, so much the better—he would be caught between two armies and ground to powder. So they talked on, full of hope and confidence in the victorious army of the Loire.

Orléans was reached at last. Our guard refused to accept even a couple of francs for all his civility, and ordered one of the luggage-van attendants to take ourselves and our bags to the best hotel. We had to walk through the station, which, during the German occupation, had been used as a guard-house and Ambulance. Very dirty and miserable it must have been. It had been occupied for German wounded from the first battles of October 11th and 12th, when Orléans was taken by the Germans, and now the French authorities had ordered their evacuation to some place in the town,

as they intended to restore the station to its original purpose.

As we came out on the boulevard beyond, we met Dr. Tilghman, one of our surgeons. He gave us a warm welcome, said he had got the telegram we had sent from Blois, but had no idea we could get through that day; that they had had the station as an Ambulance, and very rough work it had been, but that they had got a house for sixty wounded, all that were left to them then, and that Dr. Pratt had gone to England for money and stores, everything being exhausted. In the Rue Bannière, the High Street of Orléans, we met two more of our friends, and they accompanied us in search of rooms, which we at last found in the Hôtel d'Orléans.

CHAPTER V.

THE ONLY VICTORY.

THE morning of the 12th November was a bright sunny day. The Orléans world was abroad in gay costume. The bells of the Cathedral, silenced since the Germans entered the city, rang out a gay carillon, and scarlet kepis and trousers, gold epaulettes and bright blue overcoats, with a little dandy hood, were flashing about in all directions. At last we had found the head-quarters of the Army of the Loire. The statue of Jeanne d'Arc, in the Place Martroi, was hung with wreaths of flowers and immortelles, and a crown of crystal beads was placed on her head; but, having been somewhat swept aside, probably

by the wind, it hung slanting over one eye, and gave the 'Immortal Maid' a decidedly dissipated appearance.

It was our first day amongst the French army, and the cheerfulness of all around us, the quick, active step of the soldiery, and courteous manners, were quite refreshing. Good M. and Madame Fillion, the landlord and landlady, made us as comfortable as the crowded state of the hotel would permit, and from one or two of our Ambulance we heard how sudden and unexpected had been the entry of the French. The gentlemen were not overcharmed; they had been most kindly received by the German officials, had been hand in glove with the Bavarian officers, and gave us glowing accounts of the splendid house on the Quai du Châtelet, which had been allotted to them, and the magnificent requisitions of food and wine and all luxuries which had been granted them. We rather wondered, now the French had come back, if the owners of the

house would not return too; and then what would become of the splendid quarters? Also, we thought they had got Germanised, for they had adopted white kepis bound with black—the Prussian colours, which I cannot say I liked so well as the blue cap and Red Cross of yore. They had been requested to wear no brassards, as the Prussians did not like them. They had not seen the battle, but how the retaking of Orléans was effected was, as they said, a very easily understood thing.

On the 8th of November the Germans discovered the main body of the army of the Loire in the neighbourhood of Vendôme. Their own force at Orléans was weakened by the detaching of General von Wittich and 15,000 men to occupy Châteaudun and Chartres, and General Von der Tann found himself in a dangerous position. He sent the baggage to the rear on the Paris road, and marched out to meet the advancing enemy. Next day, the 9th, the battle began near Coulmiers. It was

a place of good omen for the French, for there 'the Maid' defeated our English troops, commanded by Sir John Falstaff. The battle lasted all day, the French Marine Infantry and Artillery particularly distinguishing themselves. At dusk the Germans retreated towards Artenay, on the Paris road, which they reached next morning, and were there joined by General von Wittich and a body of Bavarian cavalry who had been left in Orléans. The French rested for the night on the field they had won, not knowing that Orléans was evacuated. On the morning of the 12th Cathelineau and his corps of Francs-tireurs pushed on up to the gates, or rather entrance, of Orléans. To their surprise, no opposition met them. The German sentinels had been posted as usual the evening before, and were quite as much astonished to see the French as the French were not to see the Germans. Of course they were all taken prisoners, and Cathelineau took possession of the city. During the morning the rest of the

French army marched in. Then, during that day, was the opportunity to have pushed forward and cut a road through Von der Tann's broken and dispirited army to Paris. One hundred and forty-two German officers fell at Coulmiers, dead or wounded. From this their loss may be judged. They assert it to have been only 700 killed and wounded, but more, far more, than that number were buried, and still more brought into the Ambulances of Orléans. The burying parties affirm that they interred four Germans for every Frenchman, and the French losses were severe—2,000 *hors de combat* by their own account.

On the 11th the Germans further retreated to Toury and the French advanced to Artenay, too late, for reinforcements were rapidly coming up, and the German army withdrew to Épernon, about thirty miles from Versailles, leaving the French in quiet possession of Orléans and its immediate neighbourhood. Before quitting this subject we may

remark that in a letter in the 'Times,' dated from Tours, November 18, and called Central France, the writer says of the Germans, as regards their losses in this battle, that there is evidently concealment on their side, and that not more than 100 dead bodies were found on the field. He did not know, as we knew and proved afterwards, that large numbers of dead were burned in the lonely farms around, and not only then, but in the later battles of the first week in December. In Orléans, over 1,000 German wounded were left in their military Ambulances, so utterly deserted that for twenty-four hours no one went near them, not being aware that Surgeons, Infirmiers, and all, had gone. It was the compassionate French people who, discovering this, gave notice of it to their parish priests, and it being brought to the Bishop, he ordered the Mother of the Novices in the Convent of St. Aignan, Mère Thérèse de la Croix, to go round herself, and make

arrangements for the nursing of every one of these deserted Ambulances. In one the meat for the soup was found ready chopped, but the fire was unlighted, the attendants all gone, and the hundred poor fellows left to the chance of discovery by some good Samaritan. Long before night French Sisters and French civil surgeons were giving the kindest care to their helpless enemies—enemies no longer now wounded, and left to their mercy.

But one pretty little romantic incident may please some of our readers. A young Bavarian officer had been quartered in a distinguished French family, and there, in spite of their different nationalties, 'love was still the lord of all.' He left with his regiment to fight at Coulmiers. When all was lost, and it seemed too probable that, in the chance of war, he might never see Orléans again till peace was declared, if his life were spared so long, he obtained a few hours' leave, and

rushed back to bid his lady-love farewell. He lingered, as lovers will, and was made prisoner by the French. He was sent to Pau, and we give the sequel here. When peace was declared, and he was free, the faithful soldier came back to Orléans, and his fidelity met its reward. The marriage has by this time been celebrated, and even the Orléanais, bitterly as they object to intermarriages with the enemy, can but smile and say, after all, 'He is only a Bavarian, and he loved her *so* well.'

So quiet and noiseless was the entry of the French, that the inhabitants, looking from their windows, could hardly believe their eyes; but when they discovered the truth they gave themselves up to the wildest expressions of joy. But to their honour be it said that every wounded man and prisoner met with the kindest treatment. Fifty Germans were nursed in the Bishop's own palace, and the fact of the universal charity of the inhabitants of Orléans to their helpless

enemies has been testified to by the German generals and principal medical officers. There is no single instance of cruelty or neglect established against anyone in Orléans during the space of the French occupation. We found our quarters at the Hôtel d'Orléans rather noisy, and resolved to seek for private lodgings.

Dr. Pratt was in England, and till his return Dr. Tilghman said he could not employ us, as he had opened a letter from Colonel Loyd-Lindsay to Dr. Pratt (which letter he did not show us), and he dare not, in the face of that, ask us to work under them, till Dr. Pratt returned. We replied we had done the work in England Dr. Pratt had sent us to do, we had brought out the money for him, and stores we could give him if we worked with him ; but we begged Dr. Tilghman distinctly to understand that our services were required in three other quarters. We should wait Dr. Pratt's return, and if he did not require us accept one of these offers ;

but we felt in honour bound to keep our promises first. I asked if Dr. Tilghman had not expected us. He said, 'Yes; it was Colonel Loyd-Lindsay's letter' that prevented his putting us at once on work.'

Now, we were beginning to think that we could do better service attached to one of the Bishop's Ambulances, and rather hoped we should be released. Next day we presented ourselves to a gentleman high in the French International, who had called upon us directly we arrived, and on our saying we had brought money for the Anglo-American Ambulance, he said they had left the city. They had been ordered to do so by French authority. We had some trouble to convince him they were still there. Not to enter into details, we left with the honest conviction that for *us* it would be better to take some other service. We went to the Palace. The celebrated Monseigneur Dupanloup received us most kindly, and next day we went, at his desire and

request, to the Convent of St.-Marc, where he had an Ambulance, and where he begged for our assistance, at least till we were obliged, if we were really compelled by honour to do so, to return to our old Ambulance, the Anglo-American. A charming sister, the Mother of the Novices, came to fetch us, in a light covered car, drawn by a white pony named Cocotte. We drove down a street, past the Palace, or Évêché, as it was called, across the boulevard, over a bridge that crossed the railway, down a road with houses and gardens each side, the Faubourg St.-Marc, till we came to a high blank wall, as it seemed, with a large door in the centre.

The coachman, or rather driver, Pierre, rang the bell; the door opened as of itself by a cord pulled in the lodge at the side, and we found ourselves in a covered entrance, a square court-yard before us, with trees and shrubs and a statue of the Virgin in the centre, and beyond a very large white house, four storeys

high, with many windows. On our right a wing only two storeys high, on our left a low covered passage leading from the main buildings to those through which we had entered, and which we now saw were also a two-storeyed range, the lower windows opening on a passage below the level of the courtyard. We entered the central building by a glass door, and we were in a corridor with a pavement of black and white marble; opposite to us another glass door, opening into the interior of the house, the little hall going through to a large garden; on our right, two small rooms, on our left, a wide staircase of polished oak descending to the basement and ascending to the top of the house, and beyond it another small room. The lower floor, except this centre part, consisted of two large halls and a room at the further end on the left. These two large halls were already arranged for wounded, also the room beyond, and were called afterwards, when all was organised, the Salle

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St.-George (for French), the Salle St.-Aignan (for Germans), whilst the room beyond was for very bad cases. The two small rooms inside the hall-door were first a room for preparing linen, and used also for operations; and the second, looking into the garden, *la petite Ambulance anglaise* for *sous-officiers* (French), the one other opposite being for *sous-officiers* (German); and this, when we first arrived, was all that was used—19 beds in Salle St.-George, 21 in Salle St.-Aignan, and 8 in the two small rooms, 48 in all.

We ascended the stairs to the third floor, and were shown three nice rooms, one for each of us and one for the stores, when they arrived, and were then taken down to a snug and comfortable parlour, where an elegant little lunch was prepared. We were delighted with the house and its capabilities, and resolved, if possible, to establish an Ambulance on a larger scale, or rather assist the good Sisters to develope the one they had. We told

them we must await Dr. Pratt's return before we could decide, and meantime we held consultation as to the capabilities of the house. Two more rooms upstairs on the first floor could be prepared for wounded, two others in the infirmary, in the entrance block of buildings, and eight beds in a large wooden building that had been used as a chapel, thence called La Chapelle-de-Bois ; and there was a possibility, if required, of more rooms in the gardener's house opening into the stable-yard, and in a school-house now occupied as a military post by the French. These two were afterwards called the 'Basse-Cour' and 'La Poste,' and the day came too soon when all were crowded with wounded. Thus we have an idea of the Maison Mère, as our house was called, to distinguish it from the Maison Marie across the garden, which opened on to the other faubourg, the Faubourg Bourgogne, and this house, too, which belonged to our convent, was also prepared for wounded.

Both convents were educational establishments—the Maison Mère at St.-Marc for a first-class education, and the Maison Marie, Faubourg Bourgogne, for poor scholars and orphans. Some thirty or forty Sisters lived in the two houses, and a more cheerful, friendly, kind-hearted set we never could wish to live amongst—no gloom, no bigotry, no distrust. They received the strangers with open arms, and in twenty-four hours we were part and parcel of the establishment, and a friendship and affection sprang up betwixt many of the Sisters and ourselves that will last while life endures. There was a large building used as a washhouse or 'lingerie,' and a kitchen that could cook for a hundred, so we started with unusual advantages. Linen, medicines, and money were all that was needed to enlarge the Ambulance and make it most efficient, and then we could proceed; and we anxiously waited our chief's return to know what we were to do.

The city meantime was rapidly filling with troops. General d'Aurelle de Paladines had his head-quarters there, and daily received reinforcements. Everything was gay and cheerful, and no one doubted of ultimate victory. Arms and ammunition arrived by every train, and long convoys of heavy artillery blocked the roads. The French gun-factories turned out 200 rifles and six cannon every day, and by November 11th, 215,000 Remington rifles and 26,000,000 cartridges had been landed at Havre from America. Everything foreboded the great struggle so soon to come off. The Lycée, the Grand Seminary, the Little Seminary, the Casernes St.-Jean, St.-Charles, and d'Étapes, were all fitted up as Ambulances ; also, the Convents of St. Marc, Ste. Marie, the Visitation, the Recouvrance, the Sacré Cœur, the Little Sisters of the Poor, and many others.

With the troops came many Ambulance corps. The splendid arrangements of the

Ambulance de Lyon may be especially noticed. Every man was unpaid; they took the simplest requisitions, and lived in the humblest lodgings, though all were men well known in the hospitals of Lyons. The Ambulances du Puy-de-Dôme, du Midi, and several others, took up their head-quarters in Orléans, and sent detachments with the army for field service. The Bishop addressed an eloquent appeal to the ladies of Orléans to aid in the good work, and they at first proposed to occupy and fit up the unused Church of St. Euverte; but a committee of medical men of Orléans decided that it was unhealthy, that it could not be sufficiently warmed or ventilated, and was unfit for hospital use. In the face of this it was taken up by the Anglo-American Ambulance, a very large sum expended in arranging it; but, as we shall see, the opinion of the medical men of the place was, after all, correct.

A great number of other Ambulances were

formed, and began to fill fast with cases of dysentery, fever, rheumatism, and small-pox, and aid to support present and coming efforts was earnestly sought for on all sides. Then was the time to have sent into Orléans some of the vast store of supplies the British Society possessed; but none arrived. There was a rumour of a depôt to be formed at this centre of action, but it never was done. Colonel Reilly met us in the courtyard of the Hôtel d'Orléans, and told us he had received a telegram from Colonel Loyd-Lindsay, authorising him to give away 1,000*l.*; and we consulted together who was to have it. It ended in 200*l.* being given to the Bishop, 300*l.* to the Anglo-American, and the rest to some of the French Ambulances in the field—the 5th International, a very celebrated one, being included. Every day some band or other played in the Place Martroi, and every day, and twice a day, official announcements, written in the crookedest of hands, were stuck up

on the gate of the Mairie, to be devoured by the admiring crowd. The result was universal confusion as to what was going on. All that we could find out was that Prince Frederick Charles was at Montargis (which, by the way, he left 8,000 francs in debt for extras over and above requisitions), and that daily skirmishes occurred all over the department with varying success.

The Prussians advanced on Artenay and were repulsed, shelled Neuville and were driven back, leaving eighty prisoners in the hands of the 29th of the line, whom we met being marched into Orléans, looking rather cheerful than otherwise, and evidently glad to be out of it. We began to wonder how long all this would go on. Every day was a repetition of the day before. We had some trouble to get our baggage, but M. de la Thouanne, of the French International, went off to Tours and sent it down to Orléans. It had been piled in the Tours station for several

days, and one gentleman wrote to Messrs. Piesse and Lubin, whose names were marked on the bales, to know if he could not take possession of it. This was declined with thanks, and it arrived safely at the convent in time to be of the greatest service. Meantime we heard, to our sorrow and annoyance, that Dr. Pratt in London had disowned us as his authorised agents, and, hearing he had arrived, we sent for him. He delayed calling for several days, and then came alone. We declined to see him except in the presence of his staff, and he returned next day with Drs. May, Tilghman, and M'Kellar. He expressed his sincere regret for what he had done ; told us that his wife and family wept bitterly when his letter appeared in the 'Times,' and reproached him for his conduct; that he had fully authorised us to do all we had done but ask aid from the British Society, except as regarded the putting his men on their staff, and was quite conscious that in his

flurry, excitement, and distress at Versailles he had not explained this to us, nor made any exception, and he promised to write a letter to the 'Times,' stating this. So we shook hands, trusting to his honour. They had only sixty German wounded then, but were about to open the Church of St. Euwerte for French wounded; we therefore gave them over the money sent by the French Committee, and settled that, for the next few days at all events, until the church was opened and the wounded really came in, we should remain where we were, to assist in the Bishop's Ambulance, and decide afterwards, when we saw what work there was.

The following morning he called again, accompanied by Mr. Olliffe, and brought the copy of the letter. We mutually agreed to the alteration of a sentence, and it was to be sent to Mrs. Pratt, to forward through a friend to the 'Times.' The baggage was, by agreement, to remain till we had decided

where to work. Thus ended the last week of November. The storm was gathering, and we watched the course of events with intense interest. On Monday, November 28, the main body of the army was to advance by Patay and Artenay, and on the day before a grand military mass was to be celebrated in the Cathedral of Ste. Croix, to pray for and bless the arms of France. This was the opening scene of that week so truly called the Week of Battle.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WEEK OF BATTLE.

THE sun shone very brightly on that Sunday morning, November 27th. The streets were crowded with men, women, and children, in holiday costume. Peasants from surrounding villages had come in to meet some brother or son in *la jeune armée*; the women in clean white caps, and the men in gay waistcoats and head-dresses of various colour and form. Zouaves lounged along with their red fez on the back of their heads, and artillery officers dashed about in all directions, bound on imperative and imaginary errands. It was towards the Cathedral that the stream of people set in. There every chair was occupied

and the aisles filled with soldiery; the nave was lined with sailors from the frigate 'Jeanne d'Arc,' their drawn cutlasses on their shoulders; the choir was reserved for officers and the National Guard; and when at nine o'clock the clanging of the bells ceased, there was not a vacant space in the church. The General and his staff had entered by a side door, and Mass commenced, the Bishop officiating. The service was very short, and the music, which was executed by the band of the National Guards, very fine; but the crowning effect was when, after the consecration, the Bishop turned to the kneeling crowd and raised the Host, in blessing, high above his head. The sailors dropped on one knee, lowering their cutlasses on the pavement with a clash, and a breathless silence ensued, whilst every eye was fixed on that central figure standing on the steps of the high altar, the sunlight striking on his silver hair and rich robes—a silence broken by soft, exquisite,

plaintive music, so touching that it was a relief when the Bishop turned away, the sailors and soldiers sprang up and lowered their arms, and we breathed again.

It was soon over after this. The band broke into a splendid triumphal march, and General d'Aurelle de Paladines, followed by his staff, came down the nave, looking hopeful and cheerful. Did he believe in victory then, or did he know how the lines were closing round him, and the road to Paris was blocked by the Red Prince and his veteran army? We saw amidst the officers who followed the General the familiar dress of our own Royal Artillery, and we hoped that no stray shot would hit the gallant military attaché, whose kindly ways and frank face had already won the good-will of the French soldiery.

On Monday the city was half emptied of troops. We received a few slightly wounded men from some outpost skirmishes, and made all preparations for the coming week. Rations were allowed by the town for each wounded

or sick man. They had been very liberal during the German rule. There was plenty then, and the conquerors did not care what the town might have to pay afterwards. It was managed on a very regular system; orders were issued for the things required, signed by the surgeon of the Ambulance, and countersigned at the Mairie. This order, being presented to the tradesman, was cashed by him in the article he dealt in; and when presented at the Mairie after the war was over, was to be paid from the funds of the town.

When the expenditure exceeds the income, these funds have to be raised by extra local taxes. Therefore, as the tradespeople have to pay these extra taxes, it was literally giving their things away, for they had to supply the funds by which they themselves were to be paid. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Maire struck off many items which the German Commandant de Place had sanctioned.

Good wine, choice vegetables, poultry, and fruit, for the tables of the surgeons of some of the Ambulances, were no longer given, and I met an Infirmier of one of them who, showing me his dishonoured cheque for sundry dainties, said he thought the Maire was right. Gentlemen should not come to help and cost the poor French such a sum to keep; but what his masters would say he did not know, and just as they were going to have a dinner-party, too! We had had wine, meat, bread, butter, milk, coffee, sugar, and vegetables granted, so many ounces for each man; now all was cut off, except bread and meat, the wood for firing and kitchen use being reduced by half, and the vegetables also to one sou per man.

It was a hard struggle to get on. The good Sisters used their own vegetables. We bought two casks of wine and some firewood, but how we lamented over the stores so wasted in other places, and the money thrown

away in telegrams and odds and ends! Fifty pounds would have enabled us then to lay in a stock that would have been invaluable of sugar, candles, wood, wine, soap, coffee, and extract of meat. With that sum we could have kept the whole Ambulance in plenty for the winter. We had money of our own; but the cheque, sent at last by the National Society, instead of the gold which I ought to have had in London, was useless, and we were obliged to husband our resources.

That day, too, came a piteous request from the French ladies at Caserne d'Étapes for help. Seven hundred wounded and sick were there, and very little *charpie*, very few bandages, no carbolic acid, no shirts, no drawers, no linen pieces for dressings. The Germans had taken everything during their occupation. Not even a lancet could be bought in the city, and medicines were most rare, and frightfully dear. They had applied, through the Bishop, to the British Committee. The Bishop had received

a few bales of linen from them, brought out by a special messenger; and there was little or nothing at Tours. Could we, *would* we help them? The French Society was utterly overwhelmed, and they were in despair. We could not refuse. Cocotte was harnessed to the convent cart, and we took them what we felt we could spare. (We had already sent a provision to the Bishop.) Their delight and gratitude were unbounded.

All this time Orléans was being put in a state of defence. The bridges over the Loire were mined, trenches were dug, and batteries planted, though everyone said the Germans would never come back there. On the Tuesday I went out to see. Close by our house was the Church of St. Marc, a quiet little village church. In the yard was a bivouac of troopers who rode up and down the fields, superintending the workmen. Women were pulling up the vine-stakes and placing them crossways, to hinder the advance

of cavalry, they said. My idea was that it was not probable cavalry would charge up a slope against a mud wall, for such was the face of the entrenchment, and that the stakes would be just as useful against infantry. They must have been pulled up before any body of men, unless mounted on stilts, could have marched over the ground. There had been rain every night, and the ground was a perfect bog. The soft mud clung to my boots, till I slipped and slided about, and my companion, a good-natured, chatty, peasant woman, decided that those 'dogs of Prussians would be well tired out before they came near the rifles of the boys hidden in the trenches.'

We walked as far as the great battery which the sailors were constructing, and we admired the huge 'marine pieces,' as the ship guns were called, which they were placing in position. The battery was on a slight rise, and overlooked the ground beyond the

trenches. They told us the forest of Orléans was so fortified that it was impassable: the roads were cut, and ambuscades made in every direction. But as there were ways and means of getting at Orléans round about the forest without coming through it, I never had the profound faith in that forest as an impassable obstacle to Prince Frederick Charles that the natives had.

We met a surgeon of the Anglo-American Ambulance, and he told us how he and a friend, on hearing of the fighting at Neuville the preceding Thursday, had gone out to look for wounded, had found quarters in the village inn, and there, in the stable, was the body of a Prussian officer evidently of high position. He had been brought in terribly wounded, and survived but a few minutes. A herald with a white flag arrived and claimed the body, and it was identified as that of Count Plater. Reports were current of a victory of the French at Beaune-le-Rolande, a town beyond

the forest in the direction of Montargis; but it was said that Prince Frederick Charles was at Pithiviers in great force. All the afternoon crowds besieged the Mairié in search of news, and muddy dragoons rode in from the front with various orders.

There were in the Maison Marie, our other house in the Faubourg Bourgogne, many Bavarian wounded. On going over there we found that they were ordered to leave Orléans by the evening train. They were all in a state of great distress and alarm; and the Mother Superior begged me to explain to them where they were going. She had provided a loaf of bread and a flask of wine for each man, and their fear and regret were that they were leaving their quiet resting-place, and were to be sent to rejoin their regiments. I endeavoured as gently as possible to explain that being prisoners they would be sent to the south of France, to Pau, there to remain during the war, or till exchanged. To my

astonishment, one stalwart sergeant seized my hand and nearly embraced me, and the rest uttered violent exclamations of joy. 'To Pau! to Pau! hurrah! Not to the front; not to fight again. Bismarck caput! Bismarck caput!' This mysterious phrase, I afterwards discovered, is supposed to be derived from 'coupe tête' (cut his head off). It was always used about Bismarck by the German soldiers, as he was a special object of detestation, and also with regard to everyone else they disliked, or to express death; for instance: 'Where is Franz? Has he rejoined his regiment?' 'Nein, meine Schwester; er ist caput' (No, my sister; he is dead). I said to my Bavarian friends, 'So, then, you would rather be prisoners than fight?' 'Surely,' said my friend; 'poor Bavarians always first in fight, last at supper. When we gain, brave Germans always conquerors; when we were beaten at Orléans, stupid Bavarians, all their fault. Only let us get home to the wives and children in

Bavaria; see if we fight any more for Bismarck caput.' And this sentiment, in various forms, we heard over and over again. The poor fellows bade us a most grateful and friendly farewell, the good Mother rushing from one to the other, to see that Carl had his bread, and Adolph was well wrapped up round the throat, and Johann had his stick (he was a little lame still), and lamenting over her patients as if they had been countrymen and sons.

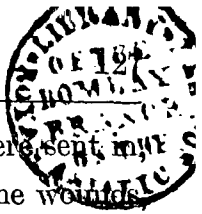
We heard that the armies were facing each other in a long line extending over many miles of country. Now I wish specially to notice the utter ignorance in which we of Orléans lived as to all that passed outside. We read on the *affiches* on the Mairie wall of a succession of small victories, of convoys cut off, and prisoners taken. We knew Prince Frederick Charles was at Montargis or Pithiviers, or thereabouts; but of all the military movements that took place around Orléans

we were and are profoundly ignorant. We can but give our own impressions of what we saw. Certainly everyone was full of hope and confidence, and never for a moment believed the Army of the Loire could be defeated. On the 30th (Wednesday) the telegrams spoke of a repulse of the Germans at Beaune-le-Rolande. After our morning's work we went out into the town, and found troops and artillery passing through it to the front. We saw a lady who arrived from Tours to go to Montargis, and found it impossible to get a carriage. Whilst she was still lamenting her hard fate, a gentleman entered the hotel where we had called in search of letters, and their meeting was most enthusiastic. It was her husband. He had come in from Montargis, intending to go to Tours, for the purpose of telling her that all the roads were cut, and she could not reach her home. It must be left to the mercy of the invaders.

We heard that the French had withdrawn from Beaune, even after their victory, and it seemed to us the Germans were approaching; but this was indignantly denied. We heard, too, that wounded were hourly expected, and waited till 11 P.M.; then, thinking it too late, went to bed and to sleep. But at 1 A.M. a Sister rushed into the room. There were three or four carts of wounded come; would we come down? We dressed in haste. How cold it was! how bitterly the December wind blew in as we opened the court-yard door! There, indeed, were four large waggons full of wounded men. The drivers were holding lanterns by the horses' heads, and the Infirmiers, of whom, at that time, we had but three, were handing out knapsacks and muskets. The poor creatures were half frozen with an eleven hours' journey in a biting frost. It was with difficulty we could get them into the house. They were, of course, not the worst wounded—those could

not be removed for a day or two—but some who that night seemed but little hurt were with us for three months afterwards, still almost helpless invalids. What a ragged, muddy, dirty, miserable lot they looked, as they leant against the walls, or lay down on the floor, in the dim gas-light. Fires were soon blazing in the kitchen and infirmary, and we took them one by one and pointed out their beds. Hot soup was brought, and we would have taken off their coats and boots and redressed their wounds, but fatigue overpowered them, and the head nursing Sister and ourselves decided to let them lie as they were and sleep till morning.

This was now the 1st of December. Having settled our patients for the night, or rather morning, we went back to our room, very cold and very tired. The usual routine of inspecting the wounds took place about 10 A.M., and we prepared clean shirts for all the men as soon as they were washed and dressed;



but about 11 A.M. more wounded were sent in, and it was only possible to dress the wounds with the prospect of making them comfortable before evening. Just after dinner came a sudden order for every man who could travel to be evacuated. Many wounded were expected, and the Orléans Ambulances must be cleared at once. Now that they were rested and refreshed, most of them found themselves able to go to the train. Two or three remained, and were transferred to one of the large halls, and the infirmary was again empty.

Later in the day we went into the city. A huge crowd surrounded the Mairie, and the good news flew from lip to lip. Ducrot had made a successful sortie from Paris; Prince Frederick Charles was retreating before the Army of the Loire; the French outposts were at Tivernon, a station on the Orleans Railway beyond Tours; the two generals, D'Aurelle de Paladines and Ducrot, would

crush the Prince's army between them. The greatest enthusiasm prevailed, and the most confident opinions were given on every side that in three weeks the Germans would be driven across the Rhine. Some even went so far as to say that the King of Prussia had evacuated Versailles, which was occupied by General Trochu, and had withdrawn to Rheims. The streets presented a singular appearance: workmen in muddy trousers and jackets going to and from the trenches, half-equipped Gardes Mobiles coming in by every road and every train, all anxious to go to the front, and D'Aurelle de Paladines! his name on every lip, the hero, the saviour! We took home a great many daily journals—the 'Loiret,' the 'Impartial du Loiret,' and the 'Gazette nationale'—and our entrance into the long halls of the Ambulance was the signal for a scene of joy that was overpowering. Whilst I read the despatch aloud, and Louise handed round the papers to those too ill to move, all who

could rise from their beds crowded round me and greeted every paragraph of Gambetta's florid despatch with almost tearful delight.

It was impossible, being English, not to feel French just then. It might have been an English hospital; it might have been the third edition of some evening paper; it might have told how Kent and Sussex were evacuated by an invader, how London was freed, and some great English general had cut his way through the lines, and some other great general leading our Volunteers, our Francs-tireurs, our citizen soldiers, side by side with regiments just come from India, and corps of colonists from Australia and New Zealand and Canada, were beating back the foreign foe, and soon we should see them recrossing the Channel, and we should be left in peace. And so we cried 'Vive la France!' and shook hands all round *à l'anglaise*, and were very happy. To their honour be it spoken, the Bavarians and Prussians entered

into the Frenchmen's joy. The war would be over, they should go home; and home to a German is more than glory.

It was a very happy evening in the Ambulance and in the city too. But next day told a different tale. It was a bright sunny morning, and about nine o'clock the Mother Superior came to tell us the Bishop had ordered a three days' exposition of the Sacrament, that prayers might be continually offered for the triumph of the French arms; also, that the flags were to be immediately put up on the Cathedral towers, in honour of the victory already announced. But even as she spoke a sullen sound came on the sunny air, the low, deep, distant booming of cannon. How could the Germans be so near if indeed it were true that they were in full retreat? There was no time to speculate on this, for the arrival of wounded was announced, and going down we found every hall and corridor crowded—poor fellows! some lying on the

ground, their heads on their knapsacks, some with folded arms, half sleeping on the long table in the centre, all weary, dirty, and hungry. They had heard of no victory by Paris; they only knew of their own retreat from Beaune-le-Rolande before Prince Frederick Charles, ordered to fight in retreat before they were defeated, when they had beaten back the attacking enemy from the positions they held, and they muttered dark threats against the authors of such treason.

One by one we examined their wounds and dressed them; the worst cases were put to bed, the others prepared as far as we could to be sent on that afternoon to the rear. Amongst them was a captain of National Guards. He had been wounded at Beaune-le-Rolande, and placed in a house close by, which had been made an Ambulance. The Prussians had fired on this house, it was burned, and the poor wounded crawled out to another place of shelter. That, too, was fired on and burned, in

spite of the Red-Cross flag. Again they escaped to a third place of refuge, and from thence, were brought in country waggons to us. For the truth of this several men of his corps who were with him answered also. About two o'clock, just as we were thinking of littering down the long corridors with straw for the wounded, every bed being full, the Intendant militaire, M. de la Cape, came down to say every man who could safely leave must go by the train at three o'clock. This was utterly unexpected, and a scene of confusion ensued. The coats and boots of all had been sent to be cleaned and their shirts to be washed, to be ready for next day; but some idea got abroad, and it was a true one, as it turned out, that the Germans were advancing very fast. The low booming of the cannon was distinctly heard, and, as we found afterwards, there was hard fighting at Bazoches-des-Hautes, so every man was anxious to get away beyond the possible reach of the

Germans, and even those whose wounds were serious, if they were in the shoulder or arm, insisted on their perfect ability to travel any distance.

Amongst the most anxious to depart was a *maréchal-des-logis* (a sub-officer of artillery). He was severely wounded in the thigh, but go he would; nothing should stop him. It was evident to us that to do so would be fatal to him, and Louise, with the greatest promptitude and decision, caught hold of his trousers, just as he was about to rise from his bed, and with her huge scissors slit them up at the side, rendering it impossible for him to put them on. It was an effectual preventive, and often afterwards he said he owed her his life, and used to tell the tale of her cutting up his trousers with the greatest enjoyment. That he never resented his captivity is proved by a very grateful letter we received from him, signed 'For life, your devoted and grateful friend.'

One poor boy, too, we grieved for. He had been in the Ambulance since October, he was very delicate and little used to rough it, and 'Émile' was the spoiled child of the whole convent. He was nobly born and highly educated, but had run away from home, and was only a corporal in the Chasseurs de Vincennes, and it may be imagined how little he relished leaving his comfortable quarters for an uncertain railway journey and a possible night at the station. We wrapped him up in a knitted vest and a flannel shirt, a huge comforter, and everything we could get on under his uniform, and he started with the rest. After they were all off we discovered that two men who certainly had small-pox, and had been ordered by the surgeon to the Hôtel-Dieu, had succeeded in escaping. They would not remain in Orléans, to run the risk of being made prisoners, and they had avoided the little cart prepared to take them to Hospital, and where they had gone to no one knew.

Louise and myself, later in the day, went into the city. It was crowded with peasantry from the neighbourhood, who had fled from the advancing Prussians, for that advancing they were there was no doubt; but still we tried to believe it could not be, and to think that what we were told was true. D'Aurelle de Paladines was retreating, certainly; but it was only a feint to draw the enemy within reach of the heavy siege-guns planted around Orléans. The Place d'Étapes was full of waggons bringing in fresh wounded, and everything looked disturbed and disquieted. We went into the Cathedral; a few solitary worshippers were there—women mostly, dressed in mourning. The Sacrament was exposed on the high altar, and on the second step was a *prie-dieu* covered with purple velvet, and a little behind it, on either side, two others. At the centre one knelt the good Bishop, so motionless that it was impossible to believe it was a living man,

his white head bent down in his hands; he was absorbed in most intense prayer, his two Grand Vicars kneeling at the other *prie-dieus.* We watched him for some time; there was not the faintest motion, not even a rustle of his purple robe. The old familiar scene came back forcibly as we looked at his earnest, rapt figure. The soldiers of Israel were fighting in the plain, and their prophet and leader was pleading on the mountain top that the God of Israel would arise and save his people in their hour of need. He had blessed them before they left for the battle; he was praying for them now—if not to return victorious, to die as Christians and soldiers should.

We left the church feeling that, even if all were lost, France had something left still in that grand old man, with his fervent faith and his gallant disposition, his brilliant intellect and his loving, gentle heart. We went home sadly, for the foreshadowing of sorrow was

upon us. The noise of the distant cannon had ceased; but what might to-morrow bring forth? To our surprise, we found Émile. That *enfant gâté*, having discovered that there was no chance of his starting before noon next day, had quietly come back, to have, as he expressed it, a good supper and a good night's rest. There were so many German prisoners going, and so many other wounded and sick, that the trains for that day were all filled. I must say that it confirmed our impression that things were going badly in front, or the 'powers that be' would not have been so anxious to send everybody to the rear. We resolved to hoist our Union-Jack next morning, and so be prepared for any event under its friendly shelter, and having ordered a pole on which to fix it, retired for the night with the comfortable conviction that, come what might, we should be able to hold our own against all comers.

CHAPTER VII.

LE DIMANCHE NOIR.

It was quite dark on Friday evening before the noise of the cannonade ceased. The poor people in the cottages around us were all in a terrible state of alarm. Many left and went beyond the Loire. One poor old man arrived at the convent door late in the evening; he led by the bridle a rough pony, harnessed to a rougher cart, containing the household goods, amongst them a mattress of blue and white check, on which sat an old woman with a copper saucepan in her hand. They begged for shelter in the convent, but it was impossible, crowded as it was with wounded; for they had been coming in all the evening.

There was no room for anyone else, and had the report spread abroad that safety was to be found in the convent of St. Marc, we should have been overcrowded with refugees. So we had to request the poor old couple to go on into Orléans, escorted by a stalwart Infirmier. We, as I have said, retired to rest, and slept so soundly we did not even hear the arrival of more carts of wounded, as when they came at 6 A.M. all the world was up and stirring, ourselves excepted ; we were not actually wanted, and the good Sisters would not wake us.

At eight o'clock next morning, when our coffee was brought, the thunder of the cannon began again louder than ever. We almost thought it must be our batteries close by opening fire, but the postman informed us it was beyond Chevilly, eight miles off on the Paris road, and that we should hear it nearer, for General d'Aurelle de Paladines was drawing the Germans under the fire of the 'marine

pieces,' and that we should see them crushed. After the morning's work we went into the city. It was very empty. Orderlies rode at a rapid rate up and down the streets, and the Lyonnaise Ambulance passed us going to the front in splendid order, the waggons for the wounded being properly covered in, as was necessary in so sharp a frost, and the surgeons and dressers marching by the side, with all surgical and medical requirements in a large case or bag suspended from a leather belt, which crossed another supporting a havre-sac with the day's provisions. They were followed by a light cart covered with oilcloth, in which were their stores. About ten minutes afterwards the Ambulance du Puy-de-Dôme went down the street and out by the Faubourg Bannière in similar order. Every man wore the Red-Cross on his cap and the brassard on his arm, and both Ambulances were accompanied by their chaplains, priests in broad beaver hats and soutanes well tucked

up through the belt and havre-sac over the shoulder.

We saw many carts coming in from the country with peasants flying from their homes before the Prussian advance, and trains were being rapidly despatched to Tours one after the other, regardless of time-tables, crowded with fugitives wounded. The boom of the cannon went on, sometimes seeming more distant, sometimes nearer, and all sorts of rumours were in circulation as to the result of the battle evidently going on all around us. Our convent was full with wounded, so was the second house in the Faubourg Bourgogne, 'Maison Marie.' The continual noise of the cannonade had rendered everybody excited and nervous, and we were not sorry when, after the early dinner, came a fresh order to send off every man we could.

As we crossed the court-yard to the infirmary to see to this, the sound of the firing was nearer than ever, the ground actually vibrated

under our feet. The sun had gone in, the sky was overcast, and a chill wind whistled through the leafless branches. Nothing more dreary and desolate could be imagined than the ceaseless thunder of the cannon, the poor sick and wounded huddling on their clothes to escape the advancing enemy, the cold, biting wind, and the gloomy sky. The spoiled child Émile still refused to go. Louise and I told him we fully believed the Prussians were rapidly gaining ground, and the city might be taken that night. It was perhaps his last chance of freedom, and we urged him to go. At last he consented, strapped on his knapsack, and went up the road after his comrades. The wind whirled up the dust in clouds, and just as they were hidden from sight a report so loud that it shook the very window-frames startled the Mother Superior and the good Sisters. Only two men were left in the infirmary, which looked upon the road, and it was thought

best to remove them into the main building, for fear of shells. Under the convent were great vaults on which part of it was built; they were in the garden and covered deep by earth, certainly bomb-proof, and here we could resort in case the shells came too near.

There were very few patients now in the wards, and those who were left begged us to go out and get some information for them. We did not think the firing sufficiently close to render the streets dangerous, and we went to the Hôtel d'Orléans, to know if the English attaché were there, and what he could tell us. He had breakfasted there, and ridden out to the General's head-quarters. These said head-quarters, we found, were considerably nearer Orléans than they had been. All to us looked like a retreat, but we were assured it was not so. How very empty the streets looked! Most of the shops were shut; not a soldier to be seen; all were at the front. There was a general air of doubt and depression abroad

which contradicted the *affiche* at the Mairie, that by news received from the general in command all went well, and the final result of the struggle could not be doubtful. It was well known too, by this time, that the victorious sortie from Paris was but an invention of some imaginative brain, and one poor, shivering citizen, looking at the placard still affixed to the wall, and signed by 'Pereira, Préfet du Loiret,' said, with a bitter smile, 'See how they deceive us! Not M. Pereira, he is too good a man, but ce Monsieur Gambetta-là!'

It was getting dark as we entered the Cathedral. The seven lamps were burning before the Chapel of the Sacrament in the right transept, and many lighted tapers before the Shrine of the Virgin on the left, placed there by sad and loving hearts, whose dear ones were where those terrible guns were firing. Suddenly, yet sharply, their echo rang through the vaulted Cathedral, and poor, frightened women and children, cowering by some great pillar, would start and look around

them, as if expecting to see some shell fall crashing through the roof. But the Bishop still knelt there before the High Altar, as if he had never stirred from his position since the day before, still bowed and motionless, with the faint light shining on his grey head, and his vicars kneeling behind him. Only the Sunday before, amidst sunlight and music and crowds of worshippers, he had blessed the Army of the Loire in his Saviour's name; and now, in the closing twilight, in the lonely, deserted Cathedral, with that ominous sound echoing through it, instead of the rich tones of the organ, he knelt in a wordless agony of prayer for the salvation of the land he loved, the fair city he ruled over, as God's minister, and the souls of the dying, even now gasping out their life on the dark, frozen battle-ground beyond the city walls. We lingered for some time, watching the scene, so touching in its sadness.

There was a small group of persons col-

lected round a tall priest who was standing by a side chapel, talking vehemently, half aloud, and we crossed the nave to hear what it was. It seemed he was the Curé of Chevilly. He had come to Orléans with the sacramental plate and other church valuables, and he told us how his little house was turned into a fortified place, the walls pierced for musketry, and a battery of nineteen siege-pieces planted in his garden. 'You will observe, Mesdames,' he continued, 'these very circumstances expose my poor house and garden to a return fire.' I asked where the Germans were. 'Not in Chevilly when I left it,' he replied; 'but I suspect they are in it now.' 'The sound of the firing is nearer,' I said; 'but can they ever take Orléans, with all those heavy guns and trenches lined with riflemen around it?' 'Ma chère Dame,' answered the good Curé, 'the cannon in my garden are the largest imagination can conceive; if they pass those they'll pass anything. And listen; even as I speak, you hear how near the firing comes.

I have no doubt they have taken Chevilly, and you will have them here very soon.'

Two or three women wept and wrung their hands at hearing this, and we thought it best to go home directly. If the Germans were coming on so fast the streets might be dangerous soon. As we crossed the bridge we stopped to speak to some men who were gathered there, watching and listening. They pointed out the smoke rising up in the distance, and told us the firing was coming very close. Some hundred yards down the line, on our left hand, another bridge traversed the railroad by the Faubourg Bourgogne, and over this, to our astonishment, we saw strong batteries of artillery passing into the town, coming back from the front, for the battle was on the three sides of Orléans (the Paris side of the Loire), and enclosed the city like a semicircle. We all walked by the bank to the other bridge, and one of the men, an employé of the *Octroi*, or local custom

duties office, asked an officer who was riding by the side of a gun how all went on. I thought his answer very unsatisfactory, though they did not. He simply said, 'Very well on our side, but we must hope still better on the other. We go to strengthen the front by Cercottes and Chevilly.'

It was certain by this that the result of the day's fighting was, that the Germans had come considerably nearer the city; and as for the wonderful crushing of them which was to take place when D'Aurelle de Paladines had drawn them under the fire of the 'marine pieces,' I did not believe in it. I quite agreed with the Curé, if they could pass them at Chevilly they could pass them at Orléans; and besides, if they were allowed to come so near as under the fire of these batteries, and were pleased to try and silence them by returning it, our position would be by no means a comfortable one. They would not be two miles from the city, and their shot, and shell, would

easily reach, at all events, the outskirts in which we were situated. We hoped and believed that the Red-Cross flag floating from the topmost roof might prevent their firing on the house, and we were glad to see that our Union-Jack was floating gaily and conspicuously from it, with the Tricolor on one side and the Ambulance flag on the other. Experience had taught us to have more faith in its rainbow crosses than in all the Geneva flags that were waving in the city, for there was a perfect outbreak of them. We were thus guarded as far as possible from long shots, and to provide against any sudden invasion of the Convents during a storming of the town in the night, when the English flag might not be so visible, was our next care.

Now, we had a Bavarian Infirmier named Matthias, the best-natured, best-tempered fellow in the world. He had been gardener in a Bavarian convent, and considered that he had been especially blessed and protected by

Providence in having been slightly wounded and sent to a Convent, where he had been made Infirmier to the German wounded, and where 'Bismarck caput' could not send him to rejoin his regiment and tramp through mud and snow, 'with no supper,' as he used emphatically to add, to carry a heavy rifle and fire it off at nobody in particular, with the certainty of being shot by his general's orders if he did not fight, and the chance of being shot by the French if he did. Matthias was of a pacific disposition, with a perpetual grin on his broad, flat face. He detested his uniform, and would wear any disgraceful old jacket rather than put it on. I now explained to him he must dress in full uniform, helmet and all, and sit in the porter's lodge, in case the city was taken, to explain to any German marauders it was a Hospital, and that there were German wounded there; but Matthias refused, weeping bitterly. He should be taken by the Germans; he should be sent back to his regi-

ment. No, never; he would not put on his uniform clothes, he would hide in the 'lingerie.' 'The Fräulein (myself) could sit in the lodge, with the big English flag; that would be *gut'* (good). And so Master Matthias walked off, installed himself in the French Hall, and announced his intention of forgetting how to speak German if his countrymen came; and there he remained, helping the wounded most actively, and administering consolation and soup together, by shaking his head and saying in compassionate tones, 'Ah, Bismarck caput!' as much as to say, 'My poor friend, it is all his fault!'

At nightfall the cannonade ceased. Many wounded came in; but they had little to tell, except that they had been fighting in retreat, and they believed the Prussians were in Chevilly. From the upper windows we saw, in the far distance, the red glare in the sky, that told its sad tale of burning homesteads and ruined farms; but all was silence now,

except the roll of the carts on the frozen road bringing in their sad load of pain and suffering. Lights were still gleaming from the windows of the Convent Chapel, where the evening prayer was going on, and the wounded listened to the soft sounds of the singing with a quiet air of repose. It seemed to soothe their over-excited nerves and lull their pains. It was such a contrast, those warm, well-lighted halls, those white-sheeted comfortable beds, the good warm soup, the glass of cooling wine and water, the kind attendants round them, forestalling every wish and changing the position of the pillows under their weary heads, to the scene of a few hours before, the confusion of the battle, the smoke, the noise, then the sudden, sharp pang; the half-muddy half-frozen earth for a bed, and the fear of being trampled down in some sudden charge of friend or foe, or being left there through the long winter night, to be frozen to death, as so many were whose wounds were

comparatively trifling. Nothing disturbed the quiet of the night, and Sunday morning came in again bright and sunny, and seeming to inspire hope even in the half-despairing hearts of the Orléanais.

From early morning wounded had been brought in, and our house was again quite full. They all told us that the Army of the Loire was concentrated round Orléans, and the battle this day would be fought in the last trenches. Pleasant news this for us, considering that the last trenches were about 400 yards from us, and the great marine battery about 900. At ten we went to the Cathedral. High Mass was being celebrated, but the congregation was a very scanty one. Up to this time there had been no firing, but just as the Consecration was taking place came a report like a sharp clap of thunder. Everyone started and looked round. Louise said it was the banging of the great west door, so distinct and close by

was the sound. It came again and again, and I could not understand why the sacristan should be perpetually opening and shutting the door; but in one of the pauses came a long, low rattle—the firing of a mitrailleuse. The door fiction was instantly dispelled; we knew the enemy were close by, and the great siege-pieces had opened fire. Many rose and left the Cathedral. We stayed to the end of the service, and all through prayer and psalm came that terrible accompaniment, that voice of war and terror. How strangely it mingled with the chanting of the 'Gloria in Excelsis!' Peace on earth! goodwill to men! What a mockery Christian practice is sometimes of Christian doctrine.

As we came out of the Cathedral and descended the broad steps leading to the Place Ste. Croix, we saw that the city was in confusion and dismay. We passed the Mairie. There was no fresh *affiche* with its deceitful tale of victory; a picquet of dragoons were

lounging in the courtyard, but what news they had brought from the front was not made public. We went across the broad boulevard, and found a battalion of Zouaves encamped upon it. They had lighted fires, and were boiling soup. They had come in from Beaune-le-Rolande, and were, after breakfast, to go on to St.-Jean-le-Braye, a faubourg close by Orléans.

Having heard that the station was still full of sick and wounded, evacuated from the Hospitals and Ambulances, and for whom there had not been room enough in the train, we went there to see if any of our men were left, and if they had had anything for breakfast. We found at least a couple of thousand men, in the waiting-rooms, on the platform, everywhere where they could find standing room. One train had just gone off. Another was being formed, and into this the men rushed, leaving the badly wounded to be assisted into first-class carriages. An officer of

high rank was carried past us by two soldiers, and placed in a compartment. I said to Louise as I saw it, 'This is a retreat; if there were an hour to spare, the colonel would not be hurried off in that condition.' Besides, we saw fresh wounded, who under other circumstances would at least have been sent into Ambulance for twenty-four hours, to have their wounds looked to. They had been hastily attended to on the field, but needed much more careful bandaging to enable them to travel in comfort. Our men were all gone; went at four in the morning, an officer of the staff told us; and all, as we saw, had a good basin of soup and a large slice of bread.

Amongst those still remaining were two decidedly full of small-pox. It is too probable that by such means the disease was spread, as was the case in Orléans and around it. A little common precaution would have obviated this. The men should have been sent back to the Hôtel-Dieu, the civil Hospital, which

was prepared for such cases. When we left the station we went to the Hôtel d'Orléans. Madame Fillion, the kind landlady, told us Colonel Reilly had come in from the front, had his breakfast, ordered his carriage to be ready at a moment's notice, and had ridden out again to St.-Jean-le-Braye. We all agreed that General d'Aurelle de Paladines having fixed his head-quarters so close to Orléans looked very much as if he had been forced back upon his inner line of defence.

Of course we were all ignorant of what was passing outside, of the General's telegram to Gambetta at Tours to say he must evacuate Orléans, and his later decision to defend it; but what we did see from the hotel windows was that the street was a block of artillery and provision waggons, carts with stores of all kinds, baggage, ammunition and guns, retreating down the street, to cross the bridge at the end which spanned the Loire. Several bystanders remarked on this as looking as if

the army was in retreat, and sending on its heavy baggage to save it from falling into the hands of the enemy; but an officer standing there denied it. He said all was going on well, but that the General considered, as the battle was to be fought so close to the town, and as the heavy baggage is always in the rear, it would be better not to encumber the streets with it, but to send it across the river. We quite agreed in the indignant question of one lady, why the General could not have fought the Prussians a few miles off, instead of exposing the town to a chance of bombardment? It did seem very bad management, certainly.

The crowd in the streets increased every minute, the noise of the cannonade was louder and louder, and we could hear the rattle of musketry. We went home; fresh wounded men were being brought in, dressed, and sent off every minute. At last the halls were again cleared of all but the very seriously wounded, and we sat down to lunch with

what appetite we could, resolved that, at all events, God helping us, we would try in this hour of danger to be a help and support to those around us, and to prove that English courage was not a mere fable of romance.

CHAPTER VIII.

UNDER THE SHADOW OF THE UNION-JACK.

It was a very long Sunday afternoon, that 4th of December; the rainy Sundays of our childhood were not so long, nor yet broken by incidents so sad. The sound of firing was all around us now, and three or four times the great doors of the convent were opened to admit wounded men shot down close by the house. To go out in the garden would not have been wise, for the rifle-balls were whizzing all round. So we waited, the bright sunshine streaming into our room, and, except for the noise, everything seeming still and quiet. Louise wrote letters in spite of my assurances that the post did not go; and

I arranged my few clothes in the drawers. Why I do not know, except that it was difficult to fix the mind on any one given subject.

About 3 P.M. there was a violent ringing at the door-bell, and one of the chaplains rushed in. Orders had been received to take the Host from all the Altars and conceal it; and this we thought looked very bad. As we were talking to the Sister at the gate, a battalion of Gardes Mobiles came by at the double. A sergeant lingered, and asked for a glass of water. He told us they were going into the trenches; the Prussians were close by; the town would be defended to the last. Probably it would be bombarded. This intelligence spread some dismay. There were thirty children in the house—the remnant of the Sisters' school. It would be well to put them in safety; and the good Mother Superior ordered that all the Sisters and children should assemble in the underground

refectory, except those in attendance on the wounded.

Louise and myself mounted up to a dormitory on the fourth floor, and from thence watched the battle. On our right and also facing us were the trenches lined with men, firing over the low earth-bank. We could not distinguish the Prussians, there was too much smoke, and they were apparently in the low wood which bounded our view to the NE. On the SE., houses and shrubberies concealed both defence and attack. On the N. and NW. we could perceive the marine batteries firing rapidly, their fire being replied to by the Prussian guns, which we could not, of course, see. The hottest of the battle was close to us, though, in the Faubourg Bannière. Had it not been for the stern reality of the whole scene, and the inevitable death and suffering that was being worked out, it would have been a beautiful sight to watch the flight of the shells as they soared in a graceful curve

through the clear blue sky above, leaving rings of white smoke in the air.

These rings, when darkness came on, were more beautiful still, for they then showed themselves in rings of fire. Sometimes the shell burst in the air, scattering its pieces about, sometimes plunged into the soft ground, throwing up a shower of brown earth and green turf, and sometimes crashed down amidst buildings; and then, when the smoke and dust cleared off, great gaps were to be seen, where it had torn its passage through roof and rafter. A house just opposite us, about 500 yards away in the fields, was almost entirely destroyed. One shot fell in our garden, close to the 'lingerie,' but did no damage. Smoke soon veiled the whole scene below, but it hung low, and up above it was the deep blue sky. We had got used to the roar of cannon and rattle of musketry, and could calmly watch the battle. No wounded were removed from the field till towards

dusk, and then they principally came in by the Faubourg Bourgogne, and into the other house.

The possibility of our being wounded, or the house itself struck, did not enter our minds. It was more than possible, it was probable; for, as an officer of the English army, who came after the peace to see the defences, remarked to us, we were in a most exposed position. The supper in the halls and our dinner were served, as usual, about half-past six. As few as possible of the Sisters remained above ground—it was unnecessary, and they had the children to care for. But all who had duties to perform went about them quietly and regularly.

At about seven the cannonade ceased; several wounded were brought in, and spoke positively of the bombardment of the city, which would commence in a few hours. The third trenches were not taken, nor the batteries, and would be defended to the last. They were utterly ignorant that the defence was

prolonged into the night only to cover the retreat of the main body of the army across the Loire. Darkness had now closed in, and for a little while there was quiet. About 9 P.M. we were startled by renewed firing quite close to us. It was very violent, but ceased in an hour; and we heard next day that it was caused by the storming of the railroad-station, which, across the fields, was very near to us, though we had to drive to it through the city, and also that then the marine battery we had seen firing had been captured.

The surrender of Orléans by General Martin de Pallières is well known. He capitulated after D'Aurelle de Paladines and the greater part of the Army of the Loire, with all their baggage, ammunition, and stores, had safely crossed the Loire. They did not blow up the bridges behind them, which were ready mined. Had they done so, the pursuit would have been checked for many days, as a

hard frost had set in, and ice was coming down the Loire in huge blocks. To cross by pontoon bridges would have been difficult and dangerous, and much reproach was afterwards bestowed by the French on such bungling management. It strengthened, too, the idea of treachery, for, to this day, there is no soldier of that defeated army, no citizen of Orléans, who would not tell you the town might have been defended much better, held much longer, and even, that had it been honestly done by, it was nearly impregnable, owing to the forest, and the river, and the trenches.

When the noise of the firing had died away we went to sleep; we were very tired, and the Ambulance was about half empty. By military order we had sent out every man who could crawl, and though the last train had left Orléans at 3 P.M., several walked across the railway bridge and gained the other shore of the river.

It was broad daylight before we woke. A good Sister brought us in our coffee, and I asked, 'What news?' 'The very worst,' she answered; 'the Germans are in the city!' 'Impossible!' we said. 'When did they come in? Was there no more fighting after ten o'clock last night?' 'No,' she said; 'the General surrendered, and the Prussians came in at midnight, the postman told us. He begs to inform you there is no more post.' 'Well,' I said, 'on the whole, I think I'll get up. We may have them here, and Matthias is probably hidden among the piles of linen.' Dressing at such a time is not a prolonged operation, and we soon descended to the hall below.

Some freshly wounded men had just come in, one so shot in the hand that amputation of the finger was necessary, and the surgeon was not there. Hearing there was one at Ste. Marie, the other house, I said I would go and fetch him, whilst Louise occupied herself in dressing the wounded; but one of the

Sisters begged me not, saying that the firing was still going on and balls whizzing about the garden. This I could not believe, and started off. I passed through our garden and came out on the paddock, at the end of which was the vineyard, and just beyond it the trenches. Surely enough, balls were whizzing about and shots being fired in all directions. However, I could not turn back.

I had just reached the low door opening in the wall which divided the garden of Ste. Marie from the paddock, when something whistled close by my head and struck the wall in front. I knew it was a bullet, and that it had probably fallen at the foot of the wall; but under the circumstances I thought it best not to stop and look for it, so I went on my way, and met the Mother Superior and the chaplain coming over to St. Marc's to see how we all got on, and to tell us they were so overcrowded with wounded they wished to transfer some into the Maison Mère.

I told them to go back; it was useless exposing themselves to these stray shots. We had thirty vacant beds, and I would go and find the surgeon, send him over, and follow myself with the wounded. If the Prussians met a *posse* of French soldiery crossing the gardens (and they might at any moment enter by the vineyard), there would be trouble unless some one attached to the Ambulance were with them.

I found the surgeon very busy in his sad work. His comrades were out in the trenches; but he himself, being attached to a Franc-tireur corps, feared even his profession might not be respected, and had taken shelter there. He asked me to escort him across the garden, and I proposed that, as we had so many wounded, he should be attached to us as resident surgeon. The President of the French International could appoint him. M. Emanuel Dupoux and myself walked back to St. Marc's, and from that day till he left, just

before Christmas, he stayed with us, and proved himself one of the most talented and skilful of surgeons, and a splendid operator. Then I went back again and brought over the wounded, and then went off into the city, to arrange about going out to the field to bring in any who might be lying there.

The firing had ceased; it was the Prussians firing at French soldiers attempting to escape by the faubourgs. All was safe now, but how miserable! As I stepped out of the wicket door I saw the helmets of the Prussian sentinels on the bridge; the road was strewed with knapsacks, arms, and accoutrements. I reached the Hôtel d'Orléans. All was confusion; the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg was there, and aides-de-camp and orderlies rushing about. I took away several letters which were waiting for me, and went down the street to the Place Martroi. Everywhere arms, belts, and knapsacks were strewed about. The retreat must have been very

sudden at the last; indeed Madame Fillion, at the hotel, told me they had all gone to bed and to sleep when the Germans thundered at the windows and doors and took entire possession of the house. Every shop was shut, very few civilians in the streets. They were full of soldiery, infantry and cavalry, the horsemen, as usual, riding on the side pavements, and store-waggons and guns were clattering down towards the Loire.

The Cathedral was the saddest sight. Within it were congregated the prisoners, 4,000 of them; the porches were full of them, pressing against the iron gates and begging for bread and tobacco. I did not go in, but hastened on to St. Euverte to find Père Guérin, one of our chaplains, and ask him where we had better go. He told me the fields immediately around the town had been well searched, but we should do good service by going out to Cercottes, and he would go with us. I found all at home quiet; the wounded had been

attended to. So we summoned the long waggon from the other house, harnessed a horse to a large covered carriage we had, and Père Guérin, la Mère Marie-Thérèse de la Croix, Louise, myself, and the surgeon started off for Cercottes. It was bitterly cold, and the road blocked with Prussian columns. At last we got free of them and came out on the battle-ground. A light snow had come on, everything looked dreary; here and there were dark heaps, from which we turned away our looks. It was too late to help them, and we must first attend to the living.

We reached Cercottes at last, a small village of one street. There were wounded in every house, and in the little sacristy of the church. The Curé came up to us as we halted in the street, and begged us to take away three very badly wounded who were lying on straw in the sacristy. We entered the church. It was entirely desecrated, full of filth, and the High Altar had black bottles and unexploded car-

tridges lying on and about it. The poor Curé had nothing to give the wounded; the Germans had taken away all his bread and two casks of red wine. He had found three sacks of rice in the railway station, and these he had very wisely taken, and the grains of rice, softened in a little tepid water, were all they had had for twenty-four hours.

We went into his little presbytery, and there, in an upper room, were all his helpless parishioners, who had not fled into the woods. An old man of eighty lay gasping in the Curé's bed, little children were cowering around the spark of fire, and weeping women huddled in every corner, and here they were all sheltered by their priest. We left bread and wine, as much as we could spare, and a little money, to buy anything that could be bought; we took away his wounded, and a German officer who came up to see what the strangers were about ordered his men to assist us. We showed him that we had two

poor German wounded already in the carriage; he seemed very pleased, and politely said, he was sure they would be well nursed.

We then searched some stables and outhouses, selected all we could take, and dressed the wounds of the others, giving them bread and wine and promising to return next day. One poor lad, a Swiss, of the Foreign Legion, was mounted on the box of our carriage, the surgeon going in the waggon with the wounded, and this boy was severely frostbitten in the foot. Louise, seeing he had not been properly bandaged, stopped the carriage, pulled out her materials, and dressed the foot then and there, wrapping it well up. He did not forget it, for three months afterwards I met on the stairs a bright, rosy lad, who smiled and greeted me. 'Who are you, mon garçon?' I asked. 'S'il vous plaît, madame, je suis le garçon de Mademoiselle Louise!' was the answer. 'Mon enfant,' I said, utterly astounded, 'what do you mean?' He then told me he was the boy whose foot she

had dressed at Cercottes. He had been put in the little house, 'La Poste,' where it was very dark, and I did not recognise him in his new clothes, for he had been made Infirmier and invested in a certain grey jacket, one of a lot sent out from Putney, which was the pride of all their hearts.

We had a long, slow drive back, not improved by the fact that Pierre, who was ahead with the waggon, chose to turn down a sideway, and bumped us over the roughest road I ever drove upon. Père Guérin, putting his head out of the window, called to him and informed him he was a man utterly devoid of common sense; he would ruin the carriage, jolt us, and, what was far worse, the wounded. It was too late to turn back, but we were very thankful to see the Convent lights before us.

Just before we left Cercottes we met two of the surgeons of the Anglo-American Ambulance. Dr Tilghman came up to me and implored me for God's sake to go on to Chevilly. There were eighty wounded in the

Mairie there, and they had had no bread since Saturday, no wine, and no soup, only grains of rice. I told him we were already laden with wounded, and had given away all our bread and wine, and asked him why he was on foot, and why he had not brought out their waggons. He told me they were afraid the Prussians would seize their horses. I replied I doubted that; they had not in any way interfered with us. It would be too late to return from Orléans to Chevilly that night, the gates would be shut; but we would come out with a store next day. But next day we found how very scarce bread was. We sent down to Pomme-du-Pin another of our Ambulances, and found they by chance had had a double supply, and could give us five or six huge loaves.

I went off to the Hôtel d'Orléans, and Madame Fillion most kindly seized upon my idea, and sent a waiter to find all the broken bread. The Germans were very wasteful, and

the breakfast table just deserted was strewed with whole and half-loaves. All was collected and put into great bags. I transferred it to the little cart, hid it up carefully under a railroad rug, and went back delighted. Louise volunteered to remain with the wounded, but the surgeon begged me to go, as I spoke German, and we started at noon. We drove through Cercottes, and stopped at the stable where we had left our wounded. One was dead, the others removed by the Ambulance Lyonnaise, and we pressed on to Chevilly. Sad traces of the fight were left on every side; the dead were yet unburied, but the snow had covered them with a pure white shroud. Chevilly looked as sad as Cercottes. All the inhabitants had fled. Every house was occupied by wounded or soldiery.

We reached the Mairie; but I will not shock those who may read this in quiet English homes by a description of *what* the state of that house was! Even the kitchen

was full of wounded. The Mayor's wife was actively employed, aided by two Sisters of St.-Paul-de-Chartres, in nursing them, and the village doctor was there. They had nothing to eat, no medicines, no mattresses, no blankets; all fared alike, and I felt the tears rushing to my eyes as I thought of the stores in St. Martin's Place, and those dying here for want of them. And with these terrible conflicts foreseen during the past three weeks, no agent had been sent out, no depôt established! When will Englishmen on a Committee learn to think and act for themselves and those who have entrusted their gifts to them, and not indolently confide all to the care of two or three men, however. active and energetic? When will they insist on a voice in the disposal of their own money? And when will they claim a full and true account, with vouchers and receipts for the expenditure of every shilling of it?

We did all we could, and fainting men

raised themselves in their blood-stained straw, and seemed to gain new life from a draught of wine. We had medicines and materials with us, and thus could make the sufferers comfortable for the day. We prayed them to try and clean up the place a little. We would relieve the overcrowded rooms by taking away some wounded and send out more stores next day. As I was trying to dress a wounded man in his great-coat, to come away, an English voice struck my ear. It was a Sister of St. Paul; she came from my own county, she had known my people, and we met as if we had been old friends. She and two other Sisters had had the charge of the village school, but a bomb had fallen in their house. The Prussians had taken possession of it, and they had sought refuge at the Mairie. We heard the full details of their misery later.

We reached home with our cargo of suffering, and found that sundry Prussians had

presented themselves at our doors, claiming food, forage, and quarters; but seeing the Union-Jack, to which Matthias called their attention, they had retreated. I was conscious that the Union-Jack bought in Orléans which floated over the other house was a very dubious sort of one, so I went over there, and found, to my horror, sixty soldiers occupying the kitchen, and even turning the French wounded out of their beds. To cook for the Ambulance was impossible, and, summoning Mère Thérèse, I started for the Prefecture, to find Prince Frederick Charles. A most gentlemanly aide-de-camp received us, and took my letter in to the Prince, who was, fortunately, at home. I had asked for a safe-conduct—that is, an order that no men should be quartered, no horses stabled, in either of the houses, but that they should be kept as an Ambulance.

My friend returned in a few minutes with a mystic scrawl on a piece of paper—the

Prince could not give the order himself, but this paper would procure it from the Prussian Commandant de Place. It was kindly and courteously done, and in doing it the Prince rendered us a service for which we never ceased to feel and express our gratitude. Armed with this, we went off to the Commandant's bureau, and were lost in a struggling crowd. Men and women with complaints of having too many men quartered upon them, of ill-treatment by the soldiery, dragoons with despatches, pushing everybody aside, swearing, shrieking, struggling all around, made it anything but pleasant. Seeing an officer of rank pressing through, I caught hold of his arm and showed him my paper. He immediately caught hold of me, I caught hold of the Sister, and shouting to the sentinel to open the door, he fairly fought us through, and we emerged, breathless and disarranged, before the Prussian Colonel.

A very few words explained. A copy of

the note we had was taken. I was asked for how many houses I claimed protection. I replied two—the Convent Faubourg St.-Marc, the Convent Faubourg Bourgogne, and their stables and outhouses. A paper was written out and given to me, and as I was thanking the Colonel and leaving, he called me back, and said, 'Has Madame, by chance, any vacant beds; if so, will she receive our wounded?' 'Surely,' I replied, 'we have got vacant beds. May I place twenty at the permanent disposal of your Excellency?' He shook hands warmly, and the best possible understanding was arrived at. I told him of the sixty men who had quartered themselves upon us, and he shouted to a fierce-looking, though small, lieutenant to take a guard, go down directly, and turn them out. Not to be outdone in courtesy, we begged they might remain till seven o'clock, so as to have their supper before leaving; but he would not hear of it, and once more thanking him I left.

As we crossed the Place Ste.-Croix we saw a stir amongst the poor prisoners in the front of the Cathedral, and went in to see if there was any help we could render to anyone. What a scene it was! The whole church was full of a thick smoke, caused by the fires the soldiers, both guards and prisoners, had lighted to keep themselves warm. The pavement was inches deep in dirt; the smell was frightful. The chairs had been burned up for firewood; many had been covered with red velvet. The Choir, being surrounded by stalls, and having high iron gates in front, had fared a little better. Still every Altar was desecrated. The sacristan wept as he pointed out the ruin wrought in the side chapels, and one or two priests lingered about the desolate Shrines in tears. Cartridges were occasionally thrown into the fires, and exploded with a loud noise. We felt some uncertainty as to where the bullets might go. We stood in sadness and horror, listening to the fearful noises around. Amidst

them came the tones of the organ, which a German Landwehr man was playing, harsh and discordant. The keys were touched by no experienced or gentle hand; and it seemed to shriek out a wild lament over the desecration of the holy place. The lamps were extinguished. The House of God was deserted by its Lord, and given up, as He was, to the hands of wicked men. It was indeed the 'abomination of desolation in high places.'

Presently came a loud, guttural shout. It summoned the prisoners to muster and march. Many did not understand it, and the Prussians soldiers struck them with their muskets, pulled them about roughly, kicked them into the ranks, and yelled fearfully at them. I remonstrated with one of the guard, told him the day might come when, in the fortune of war, he himself might be a prisoner, and begged him to be patient. He instantly desisted, said it was only they were so stupid, and if I could tell them what to do it would be good.

I did explain to the poor fellows that they must fall in and march out of the Cathedral, on their way to Germany; and seeing I was translating for the guard, an officer came up and, touching his helmet, asked me to come with him and explain that all really too ill to march, lame, wounded, or footsore, were to come with me to the gate of the Choir, and sit by the fires there till the rest were gone, when they would be taken to Caserne St.-Charles.

This I did, and seeing several poor fellows wearily limping away, I ran after them and sent them off to the haven of refuge by the Choir. The good Sister kept watch there over our flock of some fifty or sixty men. One lad of fifteen who was not very footsore, but looked very ill, we told to take off his shoe and tie up his foot; he might pass muster, and be spared a five miles' march in a bitter wind. We stood till all were gone, explaining to the guards, who as they passed ordered

them, not too gently, to rise and go on, that the captain's orders were, these men were for Ambulances. A little decision always settled the question, and seeing the Sister's black robes and my grey dress with the silver shield and Red Cross on the collar, they imagined we were going to take them with us, desisted from attempting to take them away, and ended by going after the others. The poor wretches actually clung to us, imploring us to save them, to have them left here for a while. The cold night march, the uncertain end of the journey, any misery in Orléans, was preferable to that. We stayed till they were taken away to the Caserne St.-Charles in carts, and walked home sad and depressed.

We found Mère St.-Joseph at Faubourg Bourgogne in a state of tearful delight and gratitude; all the Prussian soldiers in the house had been ordered away by a guard. But since they had left twenty fresh ones had taken possession of a large school-room, next door,

belonging to the Convent, and were clamouring for supper. So there we went, and I found my gentlemen breaking up the benches for firewood and very insolent. I addressed a *sous-officier*, showed him the safe-conduct, and begged them all to get out. They refused, saying they were sick men for the Ambulance. 'In that case,' I said, 'pray stay; but you are aware that, being in Ambulance, you must comply with Ambulance rules, or I must report you for punishment.' 'True, meine Schwester; we are ready,' said they; 'only we shall eat, shall we not?' 'Certainly,' I answered; 'but when we have sick men here we close the shutters, as the windows look into the street.' ('Close them, ma sœur,' addressing one who was with me.) 'Also, we take their boots and coats, and they must directly go to bed.' ('Infirmier, take these good gentlemen's boots.') 'You shall have some soup at eight o'clock; but I see you are all fatigued and feverish, and I shall administer a strong dose

of cooling medicine all round. I shall go and seek it and return in ten minutes,' and out I walked.

As I expected, I heard a burst of German oaths—for they swear fearfully—an immense shuffling succeeded, and in five minutes out trooped my twenty patients, and walked off to seek better quarters than in *l'Ambulance Anglaise.* A roar of laughter from all followed their exit, in which two or three newly arrived and really sick Germans joined heartily; and so closed the day in peace and security which had opened so anxiously and stormily, and by ten o'clock friend and foe, wounded and sick, aged men, paralysed women, poor orphans, and wearied sisters, 600 souls in all, were resting safely under the shadow of the Union-Jack

CHAPTER IX.

A LOST BATTLE-FIELD.

BEFORE driving to Chevilly, as we had promised, on the morrow, it was necessary to go into the city to buy more bread. The town looked very sad. The shops were still closed; a Prussian order had been issued commanding them to be opened, on pain of fine and imprisonment, and this had been complied with by keeping up the shutters of the windows and just taking down those of the doors. Many had been much pillaged, and naturally were afraid to display their goods. On every door in the place were white chalk-marks, to efface which was a heavy crime, and these showed how many men, and of what regiment,

were to be quartered there; but in too many instances the houses had been entered by bands of soldiers forty or fifty in number, whom nothing could dispossess, and as these unwelcome visitors claimed not only lodging and fire, but the best of food and wine, in unlimited quantity, it may be imagined what utter ruin it was to the poor citizens. A refusal was met by the blow of a musket, or the miserable proprietor being turned into the streets.

One old man of eighty was taken out of his bed, to make room for a German corporal, and placed on some straw in the open court-yard, the snow falling fast. He was dead before morning broke—gone to bear witness against his cruel foes before the Judgment Throne. A poor artisan pleaded that he had been two months out of work, and had no means of procuring bread even for his own children. 'We must have meat and wine,' was the answer. 'If you have no money, you must go in debt for them.' 'No one will give me

credit,' said the workman; 'I could never pay.' 'Show us the shop,' answered the sergeant, 'we'll settle that;' and the unfortunate shopkeeper named had to supply the workman on credit with articles he never would have bought for himself. But what could be done with a dozen Prussians in the shop, filling their pockets with everything that struck their fancy—a bottle of wine in one hand and a revolver in the other!

Lord Palmerston, in his 'Journal of a Tour to France in 1815,' remarks on the Prussian system of plunder as then in force as contrasted with the English rules for requisitions. The Prussians then, as now, made requisitions by order of their officers for the support of their troops whilst the English stated their wants to a commissary, 'who applied,' says Lord Palmerston, 'to the agents of the French Government for the articles required, and the supply being made through channels known to the people, and

by authorities recognised by them, the burden was not felt to be so oppressive as if the exaction had been made by the immediate order of an enemy, and at the caprice of individual officers. The consequence was, that, though both Prussians and ourselves lived equally at the expense of the country, the first are detested and the latter liked.

'On the march to Paris Blücher's army crossed the line Wellington meant to take, they having got before him while he halted at Cambray. He advanced through a line of country which the Prussians had been actually starved out of, and yet found no difficulty in obtaining supplies. The inhabitants who had deserted their villages at the approach of the Prussians returned the moment our troops came up, and confidence being restored, provisions followed, of course.'

He says also, page 10, 'Wherever we passed we heard complaints of the Prussians, who seem to have behaved roughly; at

the same time, when asked for details, with the exception of some particular cases of individual excess, they appeared to have chiefly confined themselves to heavy contributions.'

They did not do this at Orléans, and they also added heavy money contributions. Seeing in what a state of terror and danger all the people were, we went to the Évêché, intending to ask the Bishop to entrust any valuables to us. We entered the wide-open gates. The old porter and his wife were weeping. In spite of there being 100 wounded in the house—50 French and 50 German—the General of a division had taken possession of it, it was turned into quarters, and resembled a barrack. There was no one to announce us. We crossed the court-yard, and entered the hall. It was full of soldiers. Turning off, we went through the little private chapel, where all was dark and quiet, one solitary lamp still burning before the Altar, up a back staircase, and so through to the first floor, where were

the Bishop's rooms. Chaplains, servants, all were gone; we came into the ante-room of the Bishop's library, where he usually received visitors, and here we met a Grand Vicar in tears, a little carpet bag in his hand. His bedroom had been taken possession of by a German lieutenant, his two watches and some linen shirts stolen, and his purse with some money in it. He was going to seek a roof to cover him in the town.

Shocked and disgusted, we stood still, consulting what to do—how to announce ourselves to the Bishop, indeed where to find him—when we heard a voice speaking loudly and harshly in the next room. We listened; it was certainly a Prussian, but the tones were not those to use in the presence of a man so high in rank, of such world-wide reputation, as Monseigneur Dupanloup. The door suddenly opened, and a tall, beardless boy in uniform came out, followed by the Bishop, in his violet soutane, the very picture of an aged and dignified priest. He was remon-

strating with the officer that this room was his own library. He could not have officers sleeping there. He had been kept awake till three in the morning by the shouting and singing going on in the room down below him, and to have it here was impossible. But the boy answered sharply, in very bad French, 'But you must; no nonsense with us; do you hear that? Three beds to be made up in this room by five o'clock this evening, or you will be the worse for it.' 'Mais Monsieur,' said the poor Bishop, mildly. 'Do you hear me?' broke in the officer, raising *his clenched fist* as he spoke. 'Three beds here to-night; you know what you have to do; mind that it is done. Do you hear?' The poor Bishop leaned against the door, saying in a faint voice, 'Monsieur, je ne peux plus' (Sir, I can bear no more), and, catching hold of the arm of a chaplain, tottered back into his room.

If ever I longed to be a man and a soldier,

just for five minutes, it was then; but I was only a woman, and I looked the Prussian full in the face as he passed me, saying in German, 'You brute, they shall know of this in England.' He looked very foolish and said, 'I was ordered by the General.' 'You have done well,' I answered. 'I am happy to see how you Germans honour an old man and a priest.' He walked out cursing and muttering, and, not liking to intrude on such sorrow as the Bishop's, we left.

After about an hour's rest we started with the good Père Guérin for Cercottes and Chevilly. Just before reaching Cercottes we overtook the Mayor of Chevilly, and gave over to him the stores we had brought, which saved us a four miles further journey on a bitter day. A light snow was falling and the frost was intense. As we came to the entrance of the village we saw in the corner of a field that bordered the road a deep trench, and round it forty or fifty dead bodies,

all French. We did not halt, but drove on to the Presbytery, and the Curé came out to greet us. He begged us to go to a farmhouse about a mile off across the fields, where three officers were lying seriously wounded, who had begged to be transported into Orléans. Père Guérin suggested that the Curé should show us the way, and I requested him to get into the carriage. Poor fellow, he looked at his torn soutane and his muddy *sabots* and apologised; he would go on the box, he was not in a state to drive with a lady. I only felt he was worth a dozen dandy grey-gloved curates, and I got out, saying, 'If he would not get in, I would not.' So with many words of gratitude for a simple courtesy he mounted, and we started. He told us he had been helping to dig the trench we had seen. He had buried forty Germans that morning at the other end of the village. All the dead he could find left unburied had been collected, and this afternoon he hoped to inter the French.

At this juncture the road got so bad that I preferred to walk, and a very short cut across the fields brought us to the courtyard gate of the old farm. Here we met a surgeon who introduced himself as one of the Fifth Ambulance. We explained our errand, and he regretted we had not arrived the day before. They had been obliged to amputate in all the cases, and, therefore, removal for fourteen or fifteen days would be impossible; but he thanked us most sincerely for the offer to receive the patients at the end of that time, and asked us for some wine for them.

We entered the farm; it was very sad and dreary. In one room lay a young officer fresh from the amputation-table. He smiled and seemed glad to see us. Just then his comrade was brought in, hardly recovered from the effect of the chloroform, and placed on a rude mattress beside him, and the third was still under the surgeon's knife. And here the sufferers must remain for a fortnight with

the scantiest of comfort; yet the farmer's family and a bright, intelligent Infirmier left by the Ambulance were there, and would doubtless, under the surgeon's direction, prove valuable nurses.

We left what wine we could spare, then visited another farm, where also were amputated men, and finally returned to the Presbytery. Here the Curé got out, and seeing a woman leaning against the wall asked if she had cleaned out the church. In a shrill scream she instantly demanded, 'Did M. le Curé wish to sacrifice her to those fiendish Prussians? They had dirtied the church; doubtless it pleased them best dirty. Should she interfere? Names of all the saints, no; she was going back to the forest till the dogs of Germans were gone.' And off she walked. The Curé called after her in vain, and addressed an indignant protest to two old women and a child, declaring Mass should be celebrated next morning, *coûte que coûte*, and when he came back from

burying the French he would clean the church himself. Probably he did; he had energy enough for anything.

I drove on alone to where the path rejoined the high road, my two companions crossing a field to see if a white heap under a tree was a dead man or not. Down by the trench round which lay the bodies I was struck by the appearance of one, he looked so calm and quiet, so little hurt; his arm was in splints of English make. He had died from cold and exposure, not the effect of his wound. Another Mobile by his side had his trousers cut up and his leg bandaged; he, too, was slightly wounded. On the bandage was a mark I recognised; it was one of the splendid supply sent from Putney, some of which we had given for the use of surgeons and wounded in Caserne d'Étapes. One man had his head clean shot off, and close by lay a captain of the Foreign Legion, fearfully wounded.

But I will not shock our readers by details. They had been dead several days, but owing

to the severe frost showed no signs of decomposition; and there they lay, ranged round the open grave, victims of a cruel war prolonged by a King's ambition, when he might have had a peace more honourable to him in the eyes of Europe than all the victories won after Sedan; and looking on these pale, blood-stained corpses I thought of a day when they will stand before the Great White Throne, and their death on this needless battle-field will call for vengeance on the heads of Emperors and Statesmen, who looked on them, breathing, living men, as mere machines to minister to their glory or their ambition. What will be the answer to the question asked then, 'Where is thy brother?' Could that scene have been transferred to canvas, what a lesson it would have taught! The long grey road, the poplar stumps, the fields powdered with a light snow, the black forest in the background, the branches tossing in the bleak north wind, the leaden sky above, the corpses ranged

around the grave, with the fresh upturned mound of earth beside it, and the three solitary figures standing by it, wondering where were the homes awaiting those pale forms and where were the women who loved them. Would they ever know of this grave?

The Curé stood bare-headed and silent by the trench while Père Guérin, stooping over the officer's body, tried if by chance he recognised the face. In vain. Every care had been taken to collect the papers found upon the bodies; but his had been too well plundered. Probably his pocket-book had contained notes, and all had been taken together. He was to be buried on the top of the others, so that if by chance at any time search were made by his friends the body might be easily identified. There they lay in the closing twilight, and no one to bury them. The men the Curé expected failed him, and there was no one to lower the bodies into the tomb. In despair he appealed to the Prussian guard,

and two or three stolid, good-natured soldiers offered to assist; and so we left them to their sad task, and drove on to another lonely house where we were told a solitary wounded man awaited help. We found him, a young Zouave, most kindly tended by the farmer and his wife. He was severely wounded in the leg by a ball which had struck him on the Saturday morning. He had crawled into the forest, remained there till dusk, and then made his way to this farm, which was just on the outskirts. He was very lonely, and gladly accepted the offer of going into our Ambulance, and with this patient we started for Orléans, and in due time reached the Convent.

During all these days we had heard heavy firing on the other side of the Loire, and were aware that fighting was going on round Beaugency, where General Chanzy was said to be defending the way to Tours and Le Mans. The history of those battles is told in the newspapers of the 16th and 17th December.

We heard the booming of the guns, but saw nothing of the battles beyond the usual sad result—hundreds of waggons full of wounded and a few squads of prisoners. Every bed we had was occupied. M. Emanuel Dupoux, our surgeon, had his hands full, the surgeons of the Puy-de-Dôme Ambulance were in Ste. Marie, and those of the Lyonnaise at Pomme-du-Pin. A Spanish noble volunteered to be our secretary, and a Savoyard gentleman our chief Infirmier. We had no paid service, yet all went on splendidly.

Now and then Prussian soldiers presented themselves and claimed quarters, but soon withdrew. On one occasion Louise and myself were summoned into the stable-yard by the cry, 'Here are the Prussians!' and arriving there found half-a-dozen dragoons trying to turn out our two poor old white ponies and insinuate their big horses into the little stable. I sent a Sister flying for the safe-conduct, which was kept at Ste. Marie, as most exposed to

danger, being on the high road from Gien, and told my friends they could not come in there. The sergeant, a boy of eighteen or twenty, persisted that he would. The weather was bitter, his horses must have shelter. I went into the stable, seized the bridles of our two ponies, who had only just been taken out of harness, and said they were for the service of the Ambulance, and should not be turned into the cold. The sergeant grew furious, and insisted on going into the gardener's house, a small one-storey cottage, to see if he could not screw his own special great beast in there. I told him that that was the house for small-pox cases; he was welcome to sleep there himself, if he liked. He replied, 'He would not do that, he would not be murdered; but his horse should sleep there.' I grew tired of all this nonsense and said, 'To finish this affair, get out, horse and all.' On this he drew a remarkably long sword and brandished it ferociously about me. Louise stood by, watching

the scene with much amusement, and sundry Sisters clung round her, declaring I should be killed; but she knew better, and coolly said, 'Oh dear no; Mademoiselle is quite competent to take care of herself.'

I felt very indignant, and seizing the boy's wrist I twisted his sword out of his hand with a jerk. It was quite new and very bright, and I gave it back, congratulating him on the opportunity he had of trying it for the first time on a woman. His companions began to laugh at him, and just then the Sister arrived breathless with the safe-conduct. 'Now,' I said to the sergeant, 'you see I might punish you very severely for this. You saw the Red Cross marked on the doors, and the words "Ambulance Anglaise;" but if you will go away directly, I shall not complain to Prince Frederick Charles.' He hesitated, and I seized his horse's bridle and led him to the gate. 'Get out,' I said, 'and never let us see you here again, you stupid boy!' He did get out,

and his companions followed him, and never from that day had we any annoyance. The poor Sisters gave a sigh of relief, Louise and I retired upon our laurels to the calm of our own room, and so ended the defeat of the Uhlans in the Convent of St. Marc.

We were now getting uneasy; our gold was running short. The 33*l.* due to me by the National Society, instead of being paid me in London in time to get it in napoleons, had been sent after me in a cheque, that no one would look at. I consulted everybody, and was told I could get it at Tours or Bourges. Now, this was a three days' journey, and I hesitated; but we saw the men needing wine, tobacco, and vegetables, that only ready money could procure; we wanted instruments, too, and other business had to be transacted; so we resolved that Louise should remain to guard the two houses against all comers, and I should go to Bourges. Lord Lyons had left Tours, but was reported to be there. I went to the

Prussian Commandant de Place and asked for a safe-conduct to Tours. He said certainly, but I must go round by Versailles and Rouen. To this I replied, 'Nonsense! Do look at your map. Really, I cannot afford to go that roundabout way.' He turned round, studied a map, and said, 'Madame, you are right; Versailles is out of the way. Will you go to Nantes?' 'Now, why should I go to Nantes?' I remonstrated. 'I have no business there.' 'Well, Madame, you see you might give intelligence of what is going on in our lines if you went straight to Tours. If ten days have passed before you reach it anything you say will be of no use.' 'Colonel,' I said, 'if I am a spy, I could go straight to Rouen, and be in French lines in thirty-six hours. Spies have plenty of money; I have none. I wish to go to the nearest point in French lines, and I intend to go. Please to give me a safe-conduct.' The Colonel burst out laughing, and said, 'Well, I must write that you go to Nantes; but you may go which way you please.'

'Thank you,' I said; and not pledging myself to visit the ancient Breton city, I took my precious bit of paper, written in blue ink and dried with gold dust, and walked off. We have that piece of hieroglyphics still. It was never looked at, and shall be framed and glazed as a trophy.

So far so good; but how to get out of Orléans. The railroad did not run, there were no diligences. The Prussians had seized all the horses and carriages, and though I saw our friends of the Anglo-American always driving about in a basket phaeton, it was not the sort of vehicle for a three days' journey, even if they could have spared it. I went to the President of the French International, on the speculation of borrowing an ambulance waggon, to which our two white ponies might have been harnessed, and there met a very gentlemanly Frenchman, a civilian, who was imploring M. Dubois d'Angers to ask for a safe-conduct for him out of Prussian lines.

This M. Dubois d'Angers said he could not do, and the young man was evidently 'au désespoir.' I stated my wish, and he sprang forward and said, 'I have a carriage and horses. If Madame will permit me to accompany her, I will not only take her to Tours or Bourges, but she shall have my carriage and horses to return to Orléans.' Here was an offer. I asked simply, 'But what has Monsieur done to be so anxious to get away?' He turned to M. Dubois d'Angers, and most gracefully begged the honour of a presentation. It was done, and M. Maxime G—— then explained that he had expressed himself too freely in the presence of a Bavarian officer. He had justified Gambetta, whose personal friend he was, in his policy of *guerre à outrance*, he had had a hint that his arrest, though he had never fought against the Prussians, was more than probable, and he only prayed to be able to rejoin his wife and child at Pau. I told him that though I would not be responsible for his safety, I should be very thankful for

his carriage and escort, and could conceive no reason why I should not accept it. And so it was arranged; at eight next morning I was to be ready for our somewhat perilous journey.

When I got back I found our surgeon in a woful way. He had been told that, having served with Francs-tireurs, even his profession would not be respected. He was resolved to leave Orléans, and begged us to accept his substitute, Dr. Bertier, of the Garde Mobile of Savoie, who would remain as our surgeon. Next morning I presented myself, and found at the door M. Emanuel Dupoux and M. S——, a merchant of Chambey, all resolved to accompany me. At eight M. Maxime G—— arrived with a nice closed carriage, drawn by only one horse. Alas! the Prussians had stolen the other the night before. It was no time for lengthened adieux; difficulty and danger had to be faced, Prussian guards, French outposts, and camp-followers, so with a gay wave of the hand we started.

The 14th of December was a bright morning, all looked cheerful; it was a good omen for our expedition. As we drove along the quay by the Loire, M. Emanuel Dupoux and M. S—— gave me their loaded revolvers, which I put one in each pocket of my dress. It was necessary to have them, yet to have been found with arms might have drawn suspicion on the gentlemen. The little Union-Jack on the carriage blew out in the fresh morning air as we drove over the bridge and past the guard. Not a question was asked, the sentinels there paced up and down, and only gave a glance at the carriage, then down the other bank, and past the sentinels at the outpost. They did not even look at us; we breathed again, and drove merrily on through the lonely, desolate Sologne. We had fairly left Orléans behind us, and were on our way to Vierzon, from whence a line of railroad branches either to Bourges or Tours.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARMY OF THE VOSGES.

THE Sologne is a dreary waste of country, scattered stunted shrubs breaking the monotony of a barren, sandy heath. There is marsh-land, too, upon it, where lonely pools look like oases in the desert. A few villages and farms are scattered about it; and the railway from Orléans to Vierzon runs through it, while that from Orléans to Gien runs on the other side of the Loire, which bounds this melancholy region to the east. At La Mothe Beauvron is a farm that did belong to the Emperor; he bought land about that place to try if it could not be reclaimed, and the experiment answered; but all the rest is left in its primi-

tive state of desolation. We avoided both the high road by the river and the Imperial Route by the side of the railway, and struck our course right through the heart of the Sologne, midway between the two. I do not suppose English travellers ever went that way; I know no reason why they should. There is nothing to see, and no possible object to be gained by so doing; but, in our case, according to good information sent to us from Vierzon, we should keep clear of Prussian outposts. We might meet a few Uhlans, but they would be simply on a foraging excursion, and have no authority to stop travellers with an English flag.

We went quietly along, every now and then meeting a peasant, who invariably informed our coachman that a camp of at least ten thousand Prussians lay only five miles off, and my friends were slightly nervous. I had no fear for myself, and all went well till we arrived near Vannes. As we were draw-

ing near, Henri, our coachman, turned round, and made most frightful and unintelligible faces, which M. Maxime G—— translated into 'Uhlans,' and looking out, sure enough there they were, at least eight or nine, clustered round a forge, where the smith was shoeing one of their horses. Henri said, 'We are lost.' The gentlemen were fidgetty, to say the least of it; but it was arranged that I should answer all questions, and, pulling out my safe-conduct, I prepared for the encounter. 'Drive on slowly and steadily, Henri,' I said, 'and take no notice of the Prussians.' Henri did so; my heart beat a little fast; we neared them, were up to them, passed them, and drove up the street. We were about to rejoice, when I saw two in full array, lance in rest and little flags fluttering in the wind, one on each side of the road, keeping watch on the entrance from the Vierzon side. Henri grew pale. 'Drive on,' I said, 'don't stop,' and on we went. The Uhlans smiled and

saluted us, but asked no questions; and we were a couple of miles away before we could realise we had passed the last outpost and were free. It was evident, by the watch they kept on the road before them, that they expected the enemy from that side.

In a couple of hours we reached a small village called 'Isdes,' and halted to rest our poor old horse. We drove into the yard of a small village inn—how clearly even now the scene rises before me. I can see the low shed opposite the house, with a couple of carts standing in it, the straw heaped about the place, and the group of peasants who came around to ask news of Orléans. One amongst them, an intelligent-looking man of thirty, in a blue blouse, was presented as the Mayor. M. Maxime G—— was well known in the district, having a nice estate near Orléans, and he invited the Mayor to take a glass of wine with us in the long, dark kitchen of the auberge. The Mayor told us that Uhlans had

paid a visit to the village about a week before. Their coming had been preceded by the arrival of a man, calling himself 'George,' driving a fine pair of horses in a light country waggon, and proclaiming himself to be in search of two carriage horses, stolen from his master's property, near Gien, by the Prussians. This strange tale seems to have excited no suspicion, and the simple peasants asked what news he brought from his part of the country. He said he had met Uhlans everywhere; they would shortly come there. How much hay and corn was there stored in the village? It had better be hidden. Some, still unsuspecting, answered him; several, however, kept silence, and the result proved their wisdom. Next day came a troop of Uhlans, and 'required' the hay and corn that had been pointed out exactly from those people who had spoken of their stores. The same had happened in a neighbouring village. M. Maxime G—— instantly exclaimed, 'That man is a

spy; we shall have him on our track; he will be here to-day. Be sure he is just ahead of those Uhlans we saw at Vannes, and if he find the coast clear here he'll bring them on.'

The words were hardly spoken before the Mayor sprang up. 'Le voilà!' and, sure enough, a man drove into the yard with the fine horses and light waggon they had been describing to us, and, flinging the rope reins to a stable-boy, jumped down and began to bluster about, asking if there were Prussians there. M. Maxime G——, M. Emanuel Dupoux, and M. S—— withdrew with the Mayor, and a consultation was held. It ended in M. Emanuel going to order out our weary horse, and requesting me to be ready for a start. Then they went into the yard and confronted the new-comer. I saw him through the window, a fine man, about forty years of age, six feet high, with dark, curly hair and a rosy complexion. He wore a dark blue woollen guernsey and fustian trousers, and a crimson

handkerchief twisted round his throat. He seemed very excited, and was pulling out more papers and passports and certificates than ever any honest man travelled with. His last passport was only a conditional one. A request from the Mayor of some commune in Alsace addressed to the Mayor of the first town still in French possession to furnish George (I forget his other name) with a passport, if he thought proper so to do. The rest were certificates of character from various masters he had served. He spoke German very well. This he accounted for by being a native of Alsace, but his story about his master's horses was very vague, and whilst fumbling with his papers one fell out. M. Emanuel seized it. It was a German cheque on a banker at Hamburg.

That settled the matter. The Mayor took M. Maxime G—— aside, and I caught the words, 'Keep him safe, or he'll bring the Uhlans upon you and us.' Two strong peasants

placed themselves on either side of George, and the gentlemen and the Mayor withdrew with some dozen peasants, and held conference in the long shed. George saw that his fate hung in the balance, and, catching sight of me, suddenly dashed up the steps down which I was coming to get into the carriage, and began with trembling hands to show me his papers. M. Emanuel ran forward, and called me to get in quick. I did so; the coachman mounted, and the carriage was driven out of the yard. I looked back as we halted in the lane. I saw the crowd close round George; I heard loud voices. I saw our friends disengage themselves, followed by the Mayor, who shook hands with M. Maxime G——, saying, 'Yes, it must be, for the safety of all.'

The gentlemen got in, and we drove up a cross lane leading to Cerdon, thus leaving the road we had been traversing before, so that, supposing the villagers were true and silent, all trace of our way would be lost. The road

was a short, steep ascent to a sandy down. As we reached the top I heard the ring of half-a-dozen rifles, and I saw the gentlemen look at each other, but no remark was made. but I knew what it was, and that George would give no more information to the Uhlans waiting at Vannes..

It was a dreary drive to Cerdon. The road in one place had been cut, but a lad who accompanied us from Isdes showed us a path cunningly hidden by bending down brushwood where, if we got out and walked, our carriage could pass. It rained hard, but there was no help for it, and as we were getting out we saw a strange sight in such a journey. There came along the road a neatly-dressed woman with a Red-Cross brassard on her arm, driving a very good horse in a light covered cart. She was evidently much frightened at us, and M. Maxime G——, going up, politely saluted her, and asked her what she was doing there all alone, and what assistance we could be. She,

too, pulled out a paper; but this time it was correct. She was servant in a very large farm about ten miles off. The Prussians were hourly expected, and her master had told her to take his best horse and his cart to Bourges, to save them from the Uhlans. She wanted to pass on, and was most grateful for being shown the side-path round the obstruction. Her horse was young and fresh, ours old, lame, and tired, so that when we rejoined the high road we soon lost sight of her.

We had intended to sleep at Aubigny, but at Cerdon our horse was so done up we could get no farther. Cerdon was another miserable village. The Mayor, an old friend of M. Maxime G——'s father, arrived to call upon us, with two or three of his acquaintances. They heard the tale of George's arrival at Vannes, and expressed themselves delighted that he was not likely to pay them another visit. So wild and lonely was this Sologne village, that I was not sorry to find two of our party were to sleep

in the room adjoining mine, and M. Maxime G—— and his coachman in a little room at the foot of the staircase. The loaded revolvers were placed under my pillow, ready to be handed out if required, and, forgetting danger and hardship, I slept soundly.

We found next morning we were only an hour from Aubigny, a pretty little town, entered by a bridge over a narrow, clear stream. Here Henri, the coachman, insisted upon stopping for half an hour, in spite of our remonstrances. We strolled through the town, and saw several mediæval houses and an interesting old castle, now an Ambulance, with a picturesque entrance gateway. I know nothing of its history. Murray does not even name the town; yet it is well worth a visit. The only direction I can give is that it is in the midst of the Sologne. We halted again at a village on the high road, where M. Emanuel and myself agreed it would be better that the party should sleep. We were not far

from Bourges, and by an early start should be there in good time next day. But Henri was obstinate; it would be impossible; the inn at Henrichemont was the best about there; it was a little farther on, and would shorten the stage next day. We were over-persuaded, and went on. We found we were taken a good way to the left, and, therefore, a little further from Bourges, which was straight before us; and, as we guessed, the circumstance of our quitting the direct road and coming round by Henrichemont, for no apparent purpose, brought suspicion upon us.

Henrichemont is a pretty town, with a handsome central market-place. But we were no sooner in the hotel than I found we were taken for Prussian spies. Henri, too, was stupidly mysterious. He had been told, on the best authority, that Prussians were between us and Bourges; and he made matters worse by refusing to tell his master's name. Whilst we were at dinner the Mayor was

announced. His manner was very peculiar; he said he came to inform us that a sortie had been made from Paris; that Versailles was occupied by the French, and King William flying for his life to Rheims. How did we like that? My companions said truthfully, very much indeed if it were true; but it seemed too good news to be credible. The Mayor looked sulky, and walked out, saying the sous-préfet would be there in the morning.

Very early next day M. Emanuel went to see the sous-préfet, and came back indignant at his insulting manner. However, the authorities could find no pretext for detaining us, myself especially, in consequence of my English passport, and we started. I begged Henri to go straight to Bourges, and he promised he would. We had not left Henrichemont an hour before we saw, in the dip of the road, a large body of cavalry. My friends grew very nervous. It would be too hard to be so near freedom and fail at the eleventh

hour. I looked out. I caught a gleam of scarlet. 'French Cuirassiers!' I cried. M. S—— looked out, and gave a shout of ecstasy. 'Nous sommes libres!' was all he could say. We drove on; we passed the troops, and it was a comfortable feeling that five hundred good sabres were between us and the Prussian lines. Henri, imagining all safe, insisted on halting for luncheon at a small town crowded with troops; and here again the gentlemen were taken for Prussian spies, and were in a very bad temper at their reception by their countrymen. But the truth was, the whole affair was considered so extraordinary—how we could possibly get out of Prussian lines unquestioned and unchallenged, and come in safety through the lonely district of the Sologne; that it was difficult for them to believe in our tale of having quietly driven out of Orléans to go to Bourges as if it were a summer day's excursion.

We reached Bourges at last. The high road was blocked by artillery going to join

General Bourbaki's head-quarters at La Charité, near Nevers. Infantry, cavalry, artillery, waggons of ammunition and provision, Mobiles, Francs-tireurs, all were there. We asked what *corps d'armée* it was. 'The 18th,' was the answer; 'part of the Army of the Vosges.' Bourges was crowded with troops; but, fortunately, owing to the lucky chance of my being recognised by the mistress of the hotel, I obtained a small room. Having taken possession of it, I went out to try and cash my unlucky cheque. In vain. I was assured by two bankers that under present circumstances it was impossible; I might get it done at Poitiers. Lord Lyons was at Bordeaux, there I should be sure to succeed; but to go to Bordeaux to find thirty-three pounds was absurd. I bestowed a hearty grumble on the British Committee and their utter want of forethought, and gave it up.

Had this been my only business my expedition would have been a failure; but it was

not. Just the day before Orléans was closed in, I had received a letter informing me of 500*l.* worth of stores sent out by an agent to be confided to us, to form an Ambulance for the Army of the Vosges. They were to come to Tours. Since then we had heard nothing of them, and it was clearly our duty to see they were not lost. At Bourges I heard English stores had passed through and gone to 'head-quarters' at Autun. General Garibaldi was still there, and there I could hear where the stores were, and if we were wanted. I found I could get by Nevers to Autun, and resolved to go on next day. My three friends begged me to dine with them at the *table d'hôte*, a farewell dinner, and I did so. Their joy and gratitude were most touching, and when next morning early I started for Autun they all escorted me to the railway station.

We got to Nevers at noon, and here we had to make a long stop. I engaged a commission-

naire to show me the town, which he did by going full speed up and down the streets, saying as he went, 'That's a church, that's the Hôtel de Ville, that's an hotel,' and not proposing going inside any of them. The Cathedral was remarkably dirty and not very beautiful, and the town not much worth a visit. There were very few soldiers in it, only National Guards being drilled. All the troops were being sent to La Charité.

When I returned to the hotel I found a young Englishman there who had come out with a few bales from the British National Society, which, as there were no wounded at Nevers, was a superfluous proceeding. He could not give me change for my cheque, to my great disappointment. He talked of going back to England *viâ* Poitiers. It is rather a round-about way, but doubtless he arrived safe at last. In the evening I started for Autun. The scenery was lovely, and the mountains of the Vosges showed themselves in the distance.

It was quite dark, however, before we reached our destination. I could find neither fiacre nor porter, so, asking my way to the best hotel, I set off to find it. But under General Garibaldi's rule early hours prevailed. It was barely ten o'clock, yet not a soul was in the streets, not a sound to be heard. The hotel was closed, but when I knocked the door was opened. To my dismay, they had not a vacant room. I tried two others with the same ill success, and, tired and weary, I sat down on a bench in the kitchen of the last one, and begged them to let me stay there till morning.

The good woman was about to consent, when an Italian Franc-tireur, who, seeing the light, came in, insisted that I was a spy and must go to the guard-house till the Préfet could be found. There was only one resource. I said, 'Very well; take me to the General.' At first he refused, but I persisted, and we set off. How weary and dispirited I felt! and

how utterly disgusted when, entering a small cabaret, my captor told me to come in and wait while he and a companion who had joined him drank absinthe. This I positively declined, and a boy Garde Mobile who was passing stopped and asked me what it was all about. I explained; he was most indignant, and told the Francs-tireurs, if I was a spy, I ought to be taken directly to the Prefecture, and he should go with me himself as far. Poor lad! he had to march to La Charité at three in the morning, but he came with us to the gate of the Prefecture, where, to my relief, I saw a sentinel. My captor began to look very foolish, and the sentinel told us to go into the hall. We entered a brightly-lighted vestibule. An officer dozing on a bench sprang up, I instantly addressed him, and begging me to sit down, he ran upstairs and brought back a most elegant, courteous old man in a fine crimson flannel shirt and gold sword-belt around his waist. I never heard his name,

but his fatherly kindness I cannot easily forget. I told him my errand, showed him my letters of introduction, and he turned quickly round to the Franc-tireur, demanding by what right he had dared to arrest a lady with a letter to the General and an English passport. The man shuffled and tried to explain, but the officer ordered him out, assuring him that in the morning he should be taught a lesson in the difference between an English lady and a Prussian spy, and so dismissed him.

What I was to do was now the question. It appears that after the retreat was sounded at nine P.M. all pleasure and business ceased, and the inhabitants of the Prefecture were in their first sleep, though it was not eleven o'clock. The General allowed neither drinking nor gambling, his own habits, so singularly quiet and even Spartan in their simplicity, were copied by his officers, and the discipline of his *corps d'armée* was far superior to that of the new French levies. A few words of

consultation between the two officers resulted in the elder one offering me his bed-room, a dark closet opening off the first-floor corridor. The bed was a heap of straw; no light was possible, it would have been dangerous in so small a space, but weary as I was it was most inviting. I laid down on the straw, the kind old officer covered me up with a huge military cloak, and saying, 'Rest quietly, Madame; under the General's roof you are perfectly safe,' bade me a kind good night, and withdrew.

Dawn was just breaking when the opening of the door aroused me. It was my old friend. He took me into a room opposite, where was the officer on guard, reading by a table, with his revolver in front of him; and my kind friend, who, I found, had passed the night on a chair in the corridor, retired for an hour's sleep on the straw in the closet. The officer begged me to sit awhile by the blazing fire and tell him all the news. There was not much that he did not know, except the diffi-

culty of getting provisions and wood in Orléans. About seven he summoned a young officer and told him to take me to the best hotel, 'La Poste.' I should there find an English lady who could give me all the information I sought about the stores and the Ambulance work, and with my young escort I again sallied forth.

Madame M. W—— was not up. I arranged to return to the Prefecture and see the General, and then the kind landlady found me a recently vacated room, where I made myself look as respectable as possible under the circumstances, and enjoyed some hot coffee. I then went back to the Prefecture, and on my way bought a pair of gloves, for the purpose of a chat with some inhabitants. I spoke with several tradespeople and heard but one account, how very orderly the General's troops were. It was utterly untrue that the Évêché at Autun had been invaded by the soldiers. No annoyance of any sort had been suffered by the Bishop or

priests. The churches had not been desecrated, the daily services continued as usual, and the Prefecture had been offered to the General by the sous-préfet. All this I saw and ascertained for myself, and I cannot too much reprehend the practice of those who, from personal prejudice against General Garibaldi, accuse him of acts which never took place, and which accusations they know themselves to be wholly and wilfully false. His own personal character needs no defence from me. His purity of life, his kindness of heart, his generous, unselfish disposition, are acknowledged even by his bitterest enemies, and that they believe him to be mistaken in his course of action is no excuse for cruel and wilful slander. No town that I saw in military occupation was one half so well organised as Autun, and there were no complaints of depredations committed in the villages around.

It is not my place to enter into any disquisition as to the rights or wrongs of his

fighting for France; but it is well to remember, he alone of all the generals during the war never lost a French gun, and that he alone took a Prussian standard and saved his whole *corps d'armée.* He carried out his charge of blocking the road to Lyons, and whether the Germans meant to go or not, we all know that they never did get there. I was not surprised at what I heard. In 1867, at Rome, I had been told of the ravages and sacrilege committed by the Garibaldini. I visited every place. I found it utterly untrue, except at Monte Rotundo, which had been taken by storm. Nor can I conceive how those who, on the scantiest evidence, call out against the Garibaldini as mere brigands, can reconcile their virtuous horror at such things with the quiet way in which they find excuses for the massacre at Bazeilles and the cruelties of the German troops in the occupied provinces. War is very terrible, but General Garibaldi never made it unnecessarily so, and the next

generation, coolly looking back on the events of this, will do full justice to 'Il Generale.'

I found at the Prefecture that he was ill in bed, but I saw General Canzio. I was received in a *salon*, in which the furniture remained in its proper place, a noteworthy fact, as contrasted with a Prussian occupation! Several aides-de-camp were sitting reading round a central table. Their dress was soldier-like and simple: a fine scarlet shirt fastened with gold buttons, open at the throat, to show a white shirt and cravat, grey trousers with a crimson stripe, and half-boots, a patent leather sword-belt and slings; gauntlet gloves, a large grey cloak, and a fur cap completed the costume. They were quiet, gentlemanly men, and General Canzio looked so very English that his face seemed familiar to me. He said the stores had arrived safe, and in our absence had been transferred to Madame M. W—— for the use of the Ambulances. Our help would be most

welcome, if we could give it. Would I go and consult with her? This was very satisfactory. The loss of so many valuable stores would have been very provoking, and would have entailed a long hunt for them. So that they were safe and in use, it mattered little who gave them away or what *corps d'armée* had them.

Another aide-de-camp escorted me to Madame M. W——. Her reception was most warm and cordial; she only regretted I had not knocked her up the night before, and insisted on giving me some luncheon. She most kindly asked me to stay with her till the next day, but, having discovered the stores, I was anxious to return. I found that she was managing the Ambulance work, and perfectly competent to do so. They had very few wounded at present, and it must depend on circumstances whether our assistance would be needed. We arranged that at all events, till further events occurred, there was more

work to be done at Orléans. Her kindness and my luncheon quite refreshed me. We laughed over my miseries of the night before, and at noon she drove me down to the station, and I started for Nevers. I slept there that night. It was most lovely weather—quite warm and spring-like. I sat with the windows open, enjoying it, and hoped to find it the same at Orléans; but I was cruelly undeceived.

I reached Bourges next day. At Sanscaize, the junction from La Charité, some French officers got into the train, and one greeted me as a friend. He had been in our Ambulance at Sedan, and preserved a most grateful recollection of the skill and kindness of Dr. Tilghman, and the good nursing he had had there. He had been sent to Mézières and the north of France as a hopeless invalid, but he had wonderfully recovered, and though the wound in his thigh was yet unhealed, he was able to rejoin, not his regiment—they were all dead or in Prussia—but the depôt, as the nucleus of a

new one. He had some fifty men with him, and was especially annoyed at their want of order. They would get out of the train at every stop, and he had to descend and order them in.

Close by Bourges we had a two hours' delay. The railroad runs on an embankment above the level of the road, which was on the right hand. Beyond that road, on the crest of a rising slope, was another road, and on our left hand another, all leading towards Nevers. These three roads were a mass of troops going to La Charité, of every kind and sort. Even the Spahis of Africa were there, with their broad stirrups, their red morocco boots, their curved sabres and white burnous. It was reported that they carried a terrible weapon—a lasso with a steel hook at the end, with which to catch unwary Prussians, and drag them from their horses through the dirt. I never heard of its being used. Thousands and thousands of men passed us, some already

foot-sore from being badly shod, and lagging behind. Those bad boots and shoes were the ruin of France. One lot was found with brown paper soles. Soldiers could not march and fight lame and crippled from want of proper boots. If ever England goes to war, which God forbid, let there be special care taken that the boots and shoes of our brave fellows are well-made, strong-soled, and easy-fitting, and we shall avoid one cause of French defeats.

We got weary of waiting. The gate across the railway was kept closed, but we saw a break in one of the long columns, and, escorted by my military friends, I availed myself of that, and walked into Bourges. The first man I met in the streets was M. S——, gorgeously costumed as Commandant of Gardes Mobiles. How changed he was from the shabby, depressed man who had travelled with us from Orléans. His good-natured countenance was beaming with smiles as he presented

me to his General, who said in his graceful French way, 'I thank you, Madame, for having given back a sword to France.' He looked so happy that it was quite a pleasure to see him. M. Emanuel, too, was there; he was going back to his home; and M. Maxime G—— had already left, to rejoin his wife.

I found, however, he had left his carriage and Henri, and next morning I started on my return to Orléans. A poor coachman begged for a lift. His well-authenticated story was a strange one. A countess from Alsace had borrowed the carriage and horses of this poor man's master to take her to Bourges. The Prussian Commandant had sent them all round by Nevers; however, they got there at last, and here my lady presented the carriage and horses to a French General on receiving a 'consideration' of two-thirds of their value, and gave the coachman a napoleon to get back with. He would have had to walk, but I gladly consented to his occupying the other

seat on the box. He was obliged to get back to Orléans to explain what had happened as soon as possible, and brought with him all the necessary papers to enable his master to prosecute the said countess.

Before leaving Bourges I went to the Prefecture to ask for a safe-conduct, and was referred to the Commandant de Place. Finding that I should have been detained too late, I resolved to start without it. Henri's parents lived at Romorantin, half-way to Orléans. He was well known on the road, and my German safe-conduct secured us from all danger from Prussian picquets. It was, however, nearly noon before we drove out of Bourges, and still on every street, on every road around the town, we saw the apparently countless thousands of the Army of the Vosges.

CHAPTER XI.

CONVENT LIFE AT ORLÉANS.

We passed out of Bourges unchallenged, and drove away by the road to Vierzon. We reached that place before sunset, and found it had been occupied by the Prussians, but evacuated, and the belief was there was none of the enemy nearer than the outposts round Orléans. There was a very small garrison of French troops in the town, but a great many traînards or lingerers from the battalions which had passed through on their way to Bourges and Nevers. We made no halt here, but pushed on to a village some miles beyond, called Mennetou, where we stayed while the horse was shod. The auberge,

though humble, was very respectable, and I advised sleeping there, thinking it better to remain where evidently no suspicion was entertained of our being Prussian spies, rather than go farther, to encounter, perhaps, all the trouble and delay of such an accusation; but Henri was sure that he could reach his father's house at Romorantin that night, and there we should be quite safe from annoyance.

So on we went; it was dark when we entered another small village, full of lingerers from the main body of the army. I told Henri to drive straight through, but he would stop to find intelligence, as he said, and to take a glass of cognac, as I saw; and while the carriage was standing in the street, a man, looking like a miller or baker, came up to the window, and began to cross-question me. I answered him frankly, and thought I had got rid of him. I saw him go into the auberge, and a few minutes after Henri came out and

said they would not allow our carriage to go on; we must go to the Mairé. I was very much disgusted, and told Henri it was all his fault; had we driven quietly through we should have attracted no attention, and this would not have occurred. I found our accuser did not accompany us, only an energetic patriot, who, on being asked what authority he had to interfere, vanished in the darkness.

We found the Mayor at supper with his wife. He was very nervous, especially when I showed my English passport, with the royal arms flourishing upon it. He caught sight, however, of the Prussian *visé*, and remarked it was German; what was it about, and I had to explain that the passport was *viséd* for all countries, including Russia, Turkey, Italy, and Spain, as he might see, English being free to travel anywhere, and, taking the offensive upon myself, I demanded by what right any Frenchman, seeing, as the miller had done, my passport, and knowing

the coachman who was driving me to be an inhabitant of a town five miles off, dare stop me on my way. The Mayor made many humble apologies, and ordered a servant to go back with us to the carriage and see us off, and to seek for the miller, to punish his unauthorised interference. The miller, however, was nowhere visible. The indignant eloquence of the other coachman who had remained with the carriage had convinced the crowd of our not being Prussian spies, and we drove on again without further hindrance. All this made it very late before we entered Romorantin.

Henri's father was knocked up, and, astonished as he was, gave us a most cordial reception. He was delighted to see his son, and thanked me much for coming round by Romorantin, to give the family that pleasure. Under their hospitable roof I slept honoured and secure, and before I awoke next morning they had seen the sous-préfet, and obtained a

safe-conduct from him to go, if possible, to Orléans. I did hope our troubles were ended; but not so.

We left Romorantin at eleven A.M. It was a quiet-looking town. About three hundred Prussian dragoons had passed through, and demanded food for themselves and forage for their horses, which was given, and they departed, and no others had, up to that time, arrived. We were going steadily along the road, hoping to reach Caumont-sur-Tharonne by dinner-time, for there the other coachman was well known, and we should probably be free from annoyance; but as we came near Châteauvieux we met an old farmer and his wife jogging along in a cart, and they told us that a bridge just ahead had been blown up, and we must turn off the high road into the marshes below, cross the stream, which was very shallow, and so arrive on the other side of the bridge to rejoin the road. Our poor old horse was so lame and tired, and his

shoulder so sore, that I felt convinced he never could drag the carriage through the boggy ground, and so the farmer thought, and then he most kindly offered, if we would wait till he had deposited his wife, to send his man back with his horse, to help ours through. So steep was the bank, I preferred to get out and walk—the carriage coming after, drawn by the two horses, tandem fashion, and plunging about in a most uncomfortable way. I should have continued my march on foot, but the water grew too deep, and, with many misgivings, I got into the carriage. Every moment I thought we should be over, but the drivers urged on the horses, and we got safely over the stream and marsh. I offered a trifling recompense, but it was refused. The farmer would take nothing for helping an English lady who was nursing his countrymen.

When we reached Châteauvieux, our poor horse was half dead. We must sleep there, and we pulled up at the inn. But hardly had

I sat down by the kitchen fire to wait till a room was ready for me, when Henri entered to say the landlord would not allow us to remain as being suspicious characters. I spoke to him, and trying to convince him I was not a Prussian spy, I pulled out the English brassard, which, though I did not wear, I had in my pocket. He flew into a fury. He had had gentlemen there with that band—they were Ambulance men, they had come with the Prussians. They had dined, had forage for their horses and beds for themselves, and next day, when he presented his bill, refused to pay, saying they had a right to requisitions. By the description of the waggons, I knew they could not be Anglo-Americans, nor do I know to what Ambulance they belonged. However, their conduct was our misfortune. All remonstrance was vain; out we must go. The horse must be led at foot-pace to Caumont, and we must walk; it was only four miles, but the sleet was falling fast.

At this juncture I remembered that in the château from which the village took its name, and which was just opposite the inn, lived two French nobles—the Laselles—brothers-in-law of Marshal MacMahon, and sons of an English mother, and I resolved to ask them if they could not send me on to Caumont. I went accordingly to the château. Madame de Laselles was absent, but the Vicomte and his brother were only in the grounds, and would be back directly. The servants—pretty-looking, active girls—were most sympathising, and placed me close to the wood fire blazing in the huge kitchen fireplace. Presently a tall, gentlemanly man entered, bringing some fish he had caught. I rose and explained my tale: he said his brother, M. Arthur de Laselles, was Mayor of the commune and the man in authority, but he himself would go with me to the auberge, to try to bring the man to reason. We found the poor horse harnessed, and

Henri and the coachman ready for our walk. The Vicomte spoke very severely to the landlord, who persisted in his refusal to take us in. 'If your brother makes a requisition to me to lodge these people here, good; I must. If not, I refuse altogether.' The Vicomte turned to me, saying, 'It is certain, Madame, that you cannot remain here, to be subject to this insolence. I request you will accept a dinner and bed at my château.' I thanked him most sincerely, apologised for the trouble I was giving, and accepted his hospitality as frankly as it was offered. He ordered the coachman to bring the carriage and horse to the stables of the château, and there we all proceeded. The Vicomte and myself re-entered by the great kitchen, for the upper part of the house was kept closely barred.

There we found his brother, the Mayor of the commune. I showed him my papers. He said they were as correct as possible. The innkeeper was a surly, drunken fellow,

and must be punished. In opening my bag to get the papers out I pulled out a parcel of French newspapers only two days old. 'Can it be possible,' said the Vicomte; 'are these *new* newspapers?' I was very glad to hand them all over to my kind hosts, only asking to have them back in the morning, as I had promised the Bishop of Orléans to bring him some. The gentlemen took them, saying they had seen none for three weeks, nor heard one word of news outside their village, and became instantly immersed in their contents, whilst I was taken upstairs to a splendid room, where a bright wood fire was blazing. Dinner was soon announced, and my hosts' kindness made me feel quite at home.

I left the château at eight the next morning, the Vicomte coming down to the carriage with me, and his brother giving me a fresh safe-conduct. I never had an opportunity to thank the Vicomte de Laselles for his courtesy and kindness, but I have not nor

ever shall forget it. All this trouble, however, depressed me much. It is so miserable to be an object of distrust, especially to those whose interests lie close at heart.

It froze hard, it snowed. I felt thoroughly cold, but I wrapped myself up as well as I could, and was half dozing, when a call from my coachman startled me. The carriage stopped, and looking up I saw an Uhlan, lance in hand, close to the window. I instantly began to get out the Prussian safe-conduct, but the trooper shook his head, and two or three others coming up behind him jabbered away at a furious rate. 'What *do* you want,' said I, 'if you will not look at Colonel Leuthold's safe-conduct?' 'Ah, Madame speaks German,' said the first Uhlan—a fair, mild-looking young man. Then came a short consultation between them all, and the first, riding up still closer, said mysteriously, pointing to the little Union-Jack I had flying from the carriage, 'Madame is English?' 'Certainly,' I

replied. 'That is good,' he went on; 'the English speak the truth. You will tell us the truth, will you not?' 'Yes,' I answered, very much puzzled, 'I will tell you the truth, or not answer at all. What is it you wish to know?' 'Ah! most worthy and gracious lady!' continued my friend, 'you see I am young, I want to go back to Stettin to my mother; we none of us wish to be killed. Will you tell us truly, are there any Francs-tireurs on the road to Vierzon?' 'I will tell you truly, my friend,' I replied, infinitely amused. 'There are none as far as Romorantin. Beyond, I think there are, and you will not be safe.' 'We all thank you,' they shouted in chorus. 'A good voyage to you; we shall not leave La Ferté St.-Aubin.' 'Will you be so kind as to see,' I called out, 'that we are not taken for Prussian spies? we have been much troubled by that.' 'Leave it to us,' said my first friend. 'You will have no more trouble now we are here;' and sure enough we had no more.

At La Ferté St.-Aubin we halted for breakfast, and heard a ludicrous story of a Prussian General who arrived, ordered a superb dinner, good wine, and beds for himself and his staff, and when the bill was presented next day gave the poor woman an order on a banker in Berlin! Her husband, however, vowed that when peace came he would go to Berlin and cash the cheque. I do hope it will not be returned marked 'no effects.' I should think it very likely.

At last Orléans came insight. How I longed for the quiet convent and the warm welcome. It was really like going home. We drove over the bridge, which we heard had been blown up, and speculated how to cross the Loire if it were, down the Quai du Châtelet, across the railway bridge, and there was the English flag, floating bravely out over the convent gate, the Tricolor on one side, the Red Cross on the other, and in a few moments more I was enthusiastically welcomed by Sisters, patients, Infirmiers, and last, not least, Louise. She

told me all that occurred since I left. Our Spanish noble had left, and was to be replaced as secretary by an invalid sous-lieutenant of Zouaves, who was to have his permission from the Prussians. Dr. Bertier was still there, assisted by a Dr. Bock, a Prussian, from the Hospital La Charité at Berlin, who was so kind, so clever, and so pleasant, that he was as popular with the French as the Germans. Some few men had got much better and been sent away prisoners, they had been replaced by others, and a great evacuation of some twenty from St. Marc and twenty from Ste. Marie was to take place the Monday or Tuesday after Christmas Day. Beyond this there was no news.

One of the grand vicars, who had seen the carriage, came to call, and brought a message from the Bishop to go and see him next day, if I could, and to him I lent two newspapers, which I heard of three weeks afterwards as having made the circuit of the town, and

having been looked upon as great curiosities. Can we fancy such a state of things in a town of 50,000 inhabitants, and only seventy-five miles from Paris?—such an utter being cut off from the world outside, confined within the narrow circuit of the city, no letters, no newspapers, no railways, no diligences, no means of communication with the rest of France. We could come and go, we could send and get letters by the Feld-post (not that we got more than one or two at that time, and most of ours to home missed). We were English, but for the poor French there were no means of receiving intelligence or of leaving or entering the town. It was well for us that hard work and much kindness from all around made us as happy as it was possible to be amidst sad scenes and some hardship, felt all the more keenly, perhaps, just at this Christmas time. It was so bitterly cold, and the house was warmed by hot-air pipes, and the furnaces would not burn wood. There was no coal or

coke to be had. It required two Sisters to feed the kitchen stove with fuel, small pieces of brushwood, cut short, being the only ones that could be got into it, and they burnt up quickly. For us there were no Christmas chimes, the Germans did not allow any church bells to be rung; all were silenced, and the effect was very strange, especially on a Sunday.

On Christmas Eve we expended some of our remaining gold in the purchase of tobacco for the French wounded. The Germans had it from the stores of the Johanniter Ritter. Great preparations were made for the midnight Mass. We helped to decorate the chapel, and with difficulty found in the city two large pots of white heaths, and a huge bouquet of camellias, azaleas, and ferns. The chaplains went round the wards to see and converse with every man, and the Protestant Germans expressing a great wish to be present, special seats were reserved for them. When at

11 P.M. the service commenced, the chapel was crowded. The music was conducted by the Sisters, and the 'Adeste Fideles' was beautifully sung, all joining in it. The lights, the flowers, the incense, the dark robes of the Sisters, the uniforms of the soldiers, all made up a scene never to be forgotten. Several of the wounded were carried in on chairs, and when the administration of the Holy Communion commenced, it was a most touching sight. There French and Germans, everything of struggle and contest forgotten, enmity and hatred put away for the time, victor and vanquished, knelt side by side before their Lord. A wounded Uhlan was assisted up to the Altar by a Turco and a Chasseur d'Afrique, and a Garde Mobile leant on the strong arm of a German dragoon. Such a realisation of 'Peace on earth, good will to men,' we shall never see again in this stormy, weary world.

The service over, mutual greetings in the corridor followed. The good Mother Supe-

rior had ordered a basin of warm strong soup to be served to every man. It was quickly carried into the wards by the Infirmiers, and at 1 A.M. the whole house was quiet. It was the only place in Orléans where the midnight Mass was celebrated, and here it was done by special permission of the authorities and the Bishop. The Germans kept Christmas Day gaily. There were banquets at the Prefecture, where were the head-quarters of Prince Frederick Charles, and at the houses of various other Prussian officials, causing an enormous consumption of firewood and champagne, and a cutting down of all the tops of the fir-trees in the neighbourhood for Christmas-trees. The Anglo-Americans had a dinner-party, and the few English in Orléans tried to make believe it was Christmas Day in an attempt at English festivity and roast turkey and plum pudding. We passed it quietly enough. It is not a French *fête*, except in a religious point of view. They

keep New Year's Day instead as a day of rejoicing.

On the 26th the proposed evacuation took place. About forty men went from our two houses, and ten from the Pomme-du-Pin. The journey was a most disastrous one; the poor men were placed in open waggons without seats. The snow fell fast, till it was up to their waists. Many died, and dead and living were wedged in side by side. It was sixteen days before they arrived at Stettin. It was found impossible to take them on farther, as originally designed, and they were taken out of the train and placed in hospitals and private houses there. There were about one thousand seven hundred in all. One poor fellow from Ste. Marie, a Turco, who could only speak Arabic, and who had been the amusement of all the patients, slipped in getting out, and, half-frozen as he was, was unable to help himself, fell under the wheels of the carriages, and was crushed to death.

After this orders were given for no more transport of prisoners in such severe weather.

This week was cruelly cold. No coal was to be had; it was all kept for gas, as the Germans feared disturbances if the streets were left in the dark at night; but the worst of it was the scarcity of wood. The townspeople could not go out to get it, nor the country people bring it in. The first had no horses, they had all been taken, and the latter dare not run the risk of losing theirs. I paid eighty francs for wood enough for our one small bedroom, to last ten days. Provisions, too, were very scarce. The butcher often declared he had no meat; the tradesmen would always, if possible, avoid giving it on requisition. They had to pay ready money for the meat, and wait an uncertain time for repayment. The Germans have enormous appetites, and, of course, helped themselves first, and there was little left for the rest. If I had had money instead of a useless cheque I could have

bought many things to eke out the scanty rations; but we had very little gold, and though at this time, through the kindness of Count Bernstorff, I received 30*l.* in Bank of England notes instead of the Committee's cheque, they were just as useless; I could not get them changed.

Every day things got scarcer and scarcer. Tobacco could not be had for love or money, and the cold grew worse and worse. We tried our best to keep up the spirits of the men. Dominoes, draughts, cards, and games of different sorts were produced to pass away the weary day, and the chapel services, with their sweet music, were an unfailing source of interest. We heard no news, received no letters. Books and newspapers were strangers to us. Occasionally a visit from some of the English in Orléans enlivened us. To tell the truth, we were all very badly off; yet our little money really seemed to last like the widow's cruise of oil. The men in our own two wards and all the Infirmiers were always

well dressed—the 'beaux messieurs,' as they called themselves, of the establishment, and it was a great object to get transferred from the other halls to the Salle Anglaise—the 'Salle St.-George,' as the Sisters had named it. Our lives were certainly very quiet, but not dull. Every day had its new object of interest and anxiety in the matter of clothes and food for our patients. We had such a splendid store that we pretty well supplied all the wards.

The Sisters were indefatigable; one in especial we must not forget, good Sister St.-Antoine, the head nurse. Every man in the Ambulance loved her rosy, kindly face, and welcomed her with smiles as she trotted into the wards with her basket of materials on her arm, her robe tucked up, and her merry greeting: 'Now then, *mes enfants*, I am ready for you.' She always had two or three pets, usually boys, who became of course the *enfants gâtés* of the place, and when remonstrated with on spoiling them as she did with bread and jam, and begging little extras of shirts

and tobacco for their special benefit, her reply was, looking sunnier than ever, 'But they are such babies, chère demoiselle, such little babies, and they like it so!' Her German pets were a difficulty; they used to impose upon her in every way, and one young rascal of a trooper declared that he would not go back to Berlin without her, which being translated, she only laughed, and beg me to assure him she meant to come to Berlin some day with the French army, and would be sure to look out for him.

The most perfect harmony subsisted. We had put the Germans in one of the long halls all together, thinking they would prefer it; but the Hessians and Bavarians refused to sleep in the same room with the Prussians, so French wounded were mixed with them, and no single quarrel or dispute ever occurred. As for ourselves, the most perfect understanding existed between us and the Sisters. We all worked together, shared hardship and danger

alike, and an affection and esteem sprang up which we trust will be life-long. They were so unaffectedly good, so truly religious, and full of faith, and trust, and resignation, in the darkest days, always cheerful and hopeful amidst all the terrible anxiety as to the fate of their Sisters, scattered over the Department of the Loiret in thirty dependent houses, that we could not help learning to sympathise in their joys and sorrows as if they had been our own and we had really belonged to the Sisterhood of St. Aignan. And one remark more I must make: they were aware we were not members of their Church, but no attempt was ever made to 'convert' us. They saw that we showed every possible respect to their religious observances, that we urged upon the Catholic soldiers the performance of their duties, and they were content to accept us as we were, without enquiring narrowly into the differences in our creed. War does away with bigotry. It tries the stuff of which

men's religion is made—whether it will bear the test of calmness in danger, cheerfulness in hardship, and self-sacrifice in a great and holy cause. Those qualities once proved, members of all faiths think of each other in a wide and noble spirit of gentle judgment. 'They are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven.'

The week passed away quietly and sadly. We heard rumours of a large army under General Chanzy coming down on Orléans by the way of Vendôme; again, that Bourbaki was moving rapidly across the Sologne by Tigy and Ferté St.-Aubin, and every hour we expected to hear 'the opening cannons roar.' We suffered much from cold, not personally, but the wards could not be made warm. An English officer then in Orléans, who had friends at head-quarters, made every effort to get us an order for coals. Prince Frederick Charles gave one, but in vain. The Commandant refused; he dare not

do it; he had superior orders from head-quarters at Versailles. We, however, got an additional grant of wood, which, when there was any in Orléans, was of great use. Money got scarcer and scarcer with all of us. The poor Sisters had literally none. One day we saw the Sister who acted as porteress making shoes with serge soles. We remonstrated that on a damp day these soles would be like a sponge. 'Very true,' she said; but there is no money to buy leather with. The Sisters who wear these must stay within doors.'

We had a great loss, too. Cocotte, the white pony, died of cold and starvation, and we should not have been able to send into the town for the bread and meat, but that, luckily, Pierre, the convent coachman and gardener, had met a man a few days before with a wounded artillery horse. Pierre directly asked the man if he would part with his horse. He answered, 'Yes, for five francs.' The horse was brought home, cured,

and took poor Cocotte's place. He was a singular creature; he objected to leave the city, except by the road he had entered, and if once he had stopped at a house or shop always insisted on stopping there again. Cocotte was buried in the paddock, and on my announcing the fact to some of the wounded men they exclaimed, 'What a pity it was! He would have stewed down so well with onions!'

Matthias, our Bavarian Infirmier, and Paul, a French one, who drove 'M. Cinq-Francs,' as the new black horse was called, were two characters, especially Paul, who by sheer impudence established such friendly relations with the Prussian Commandant de Place, that he got extra rations of everything for the Ambulance. Matthias aided him by praising the kindness shown to the German wounded, and his round, rosy, happy face bore evidence that he at least had no cause of complaint. He was a sharp boy, too. On one

occasion an order was given for a sack of rice. On presenting it, this precious pair were informed there was no rice, on which Matthias, who could make Paul understand, requested his colleague to inform the grocer that he should take a sack of vermicelli instead, which he did, regardless of the difference in price, and for some days after the whole Ambulance feasted on soup well thickened with vermicelli.

On the Wednesday in the Christmas week we were called downstairs to receive a Hessian general, who announced himself as come to see the English ladies and the Ambulance on the part of Prince Louis. He went over every part of it, even the kitchen and laundry, spoke to all the patients, and on leaving turned to the three officers who accompanied him and said how delighted he was with everything. He then thanked the Mother Superior and ourselves for the great kindness shown to the German wounded, and said they

seemed so very happy and contented, and in bidding us good-bye most courteously added, 'I shall tell the Prince, ladies, and he will be pleased to write to his wife that her country-women have the best Ambulance in Orléans.' I mention this here simply to show the kind friends who assisted us that their gifts were not wasted nor their trust misplaced.

We had a cheerful New Year's Day. I had actually bought a turkey and some good wine, hidden from German eyes in the deep recesses of a wine-merchant's cellar. It was a farewell banquet (?), too, to our kind friend Dr. Bertier, who was summoned to rejoin his regiment, and from whom we parted with sincere regret, and with this week we bade farewell, too, to quiet days in our convent life at Orléans.

CHAPTER XII.

A SAD NEW YEAR.

On the Tuesday after New Year's Day Dr. Bertier left us. We found it impossible to replace him by any French surgeon; all those attached to Ambulances had vanished one by one into French lines, the last of all being Dr. François, a surgeon of the Ambulance Lyonnaise, who had been left with the wounded at Pomme-du-Pin. The Ambulance had requested permission to return to Lyons. Most of its surgeons belonged to the great Hospital there—La Charité; and their time of leave was up. The German officials, regardless of the fact that Lyons, by way of Bourges, was but a three days' journey, even now, from Orléans,

sent them round by Saarbruck and Basle ; an eighteen days' journey, and even poor Dr. François had to make the same tour to get home. We could find no civilian doctor. All were too fully occupied, and we were, besides, quite satisfied with Dr. Bock.

On Wednesday, Prince Frederick Charles left with his head-quarters to meet and, if possible, defeat the army of General Chanzy, which was advancing on Paris by Vendôme. The weather was terrible that week and the next, the snow fell heavily, and the sufferings of the soldiers on both sides must have been dreadful. Camping out under such circumstances must have been the death of many a brave man whom shot and shell had spared, and as for the wounded, unless found and taken off the field at once, there was not a hope for them. They would be hidden in the snow long before they were frozen to death. On the Friday, to our deep regret, Dr. Bock received orders to take charge of the Caserne Place d'Étapes, and was super-

seded by Dr. Kröner, a gentlemanly little German, with whom we all got on perfectly. He did his best for everyone, and was very kind and considerate. So far so good. But the next week we were hastily summoned downstairs one morning and informed that a Civil Inspector and a Physician Inspector had been appointed, and that the Ambulance was to be attached to the 9th *corps d'armée*; in short, we were to be turned into Germans altogether, and it was darkly hinted that one or both of us would be attached to this new-formed Ambulance for service at the front with the Prussians.

Louise, the good Mother Superior, Mother St.-Joseph at Ste.-Marie, and myself were all equally determined that we would not be 'required' in this way; and whilst I went to get a copy of the safe-conduct which granted the two convents to *myself* alone, to be used as Ambulances, Louise faced the new 'Ober-Arzt,' or head physician. That he had very

properly been ordered to do service in the Ambulance was probable—one surgeon was not enough for so many wounded—but that he had any right to take possession of our Ambulance and ourselves was not so clear. Louise found him, as she said, 'bullying everybody! No other words could express it.' He was a Jew of most pronounced type, spoke very bad English and worse French, but fancied himself a splendid scholar in both, and Louise instantly attacked him.

By the time I arrived as a reinforcement the battle was won. Dr. Kröner was in roars of laughter, the Mother Superior mildly triumphant, and Dr. C—— retreating, quoting as he went, in the worst of pronunciations, 'Rule, Britannia! Britannia rules the waves,' to which Louise emphatically rejoined, 'Yes; and "Britons never shall be slaves!"'

It was settled that we should remain as the Ambulance Anglaise, that our two halls should be always reserved for French wounded,

and that both parties should render to each other all the assistance in their power. One thing he said to Louise she very soon put down, 'You two women cannot come here and make an Ambulance;' to which she replied, 'That I don't care the least about; we *have* formed one, and we *shall* keep it.' But from that day, though Dr. C—— was a horrible fidget, he never attempted to interfere. If he only would have spoken German he would have been intelligible; but, no! he would show off his learning, and under the delusion that the louder he spoke the better he should be understood, he roared out the worst compound of European languages I ever heard, and thereby gained a character for ferocity of which, I do believe, he was utterly undeserving. Our first trouble with the little man was about *counterpanes*. There were about four green ones in the Salle St.-George to seventeen beds, and nothing would satisfy him but that all the coverlets should be green. Five or

six more were found in other halls, and the Inspector discovered some 'couvertures vertes,' or, as he called them, 'goufertures fertes,' at the Convent of the Bon Pasteur opposite, after having spent two hours searching for them in town. He had formed this convent into an Ambulance of his own, for only Germans, and thereby much annoyed the Mother Superior, who could not see why her poor French wounded were sent off to dreary barracks to be replaced by Prussian sick; and when Dr. C—— blundered in, and demanded her green coverlets, which had been piled in the entrance-hall, ready for transportation to our establishment, she ordered them to be taken back into the wards, and defied him to remove them without her sanction.

Dr. C—— came back considerably crest-fallen. 'Mein Himmel!' he groaned to me, 'what for are you Engländer so intractable?' for the Mother of the Bon Pasteur was

English, too. I advised him to take a civil message from us requesting the loan of the green counterpanes in exchange for some of our brown ones. It had its due effect, and this mighty affair was arranged after two days' constant worry, during which Dr. C—— came and went so often that he gained for himself the name of 'the Wandering Jew,' which he retained to the last. He was at once the plague and the amusement of his subordinates, and Dr. Kröner's assistant, an intelligent German student, was especially delighted with the counterpane affair, and proposed suggesting to 'Le Juif errant' to *turf* the halls, that the green grass might match the counterpanes. We, however, finding Dr. C——'s weak side was to have everything, as he called it, 'aspect,' placed a bed at one end of the ward, the Salle St.-George, in which was a Frenchman seriously wounded in the arm, the worst arm case, and faced him at the other end with the worst wound in the leg. We dressed all the men

who could not leave their beds in scarlet flannel jackets, and all who could hobble about in brown cloth ones, and when next Dr. C—— arrived he went into a state of ecstasy, exclaiming, 'See now how beautiful! we are *aspect* now,' and from that day became quite good-tempered and very proud of the Ambulance, which he praised in private and public with an absurd idea—it was all his formation and his management that had attained such brilliant results—an idea at which Dr. Bock and all the medical men who had been in it and seen it, long before Dr. C—— left Saarbruck, laughed heartily.

Three German Infirmiers came to reside in the house; they were very good-natured and very idle. They went round the wards with the doctor in the morning to take down names for evacuation; the Germans to rejoin their regiments—a process they particularly objected to (and no wonder in such weather)—and the French ready for the next transport

of prisoners to Germany. They ate and drank and smoked, required the best of food and wine, and were particular as to having coffee, good bread, and honey at three P.M., to sustain fainting nature between dinner at twelve and supper at six. They lived a great deal better than any of us, and had far less to do ; and they had each a soldier servant to wait upon them and clean their boots. They were not above begging, though, and whenever they saw me bringing down socks and shirts for the wounded asked for some for themselves, and I sometimes complied with the request, as I found that, whenever I did so, the result was a distribution of cigars, good wine, fresh eggs, and stewed prunes to the French wounded. These stores were sent in by the German Intendance for the use of the Germans; but we kept the Infirmiers in good temper by giving them all we could and asking them to do nothing, and by this means procured a few extra luxuries for our poor Frenchmen. On

the whole, we had no complaint whatever to make of them. They were quiet, respectful, and never interfered with us; very stern with their own men, but did not order the French about; and when they left, after the peace, spoke most highly of the way in which they had been treated at St. Marc.

Dr. C—— insisted on having twenty more beds, and the good Mother Superior gave up the pretty private chapel of the community, which was on the floor above the public chapel, and it was devoted entirely to German wounded. It was a sad pity to dismantle it altogether, and the cost of restoring it to its original condition will be considerable. The Altar was left. The German Infirmiers enforced upon all comers the necessity of not in any way profaning it, and, moreover, Dr. C—— ordered that no man should arise and walk about the room till after the seven o'clock Mass below was over, and during Vespers that they should sit quiet and make

no noise by singing or talking, and so great is German discipline that the orders once given were never infringed. There were not beds, mattresses, and sheets enough for so many extra men, and Dr. C—— sent in an application to the Knights of St. John, who had immense stores in the railway station.

It has been said that the English money, so much of which was given to the Knights of St. John, was equally distributed by them between Germans and French. It was not so; nor could it be expected. The 'Johanitter Ritter' are the great Hospitaller Order of Prussia. They are attached in that capacity to the German army. They do not profess to be neutral or international. Nothing could be had from their stores in Orléans unless upon the order of a German physician, countersigned by Count Stolberg, one of their chiefs, and this was not given, naturally, to any Ambulances that had not a German head, and was given for the use of the German wounded.

We were English; we had brought our own stores; we always gave to the Germans if, as it very rarely happened, they were not supplied from their own ample resources; and Dr. C—— told us to take all he got and use it indifferently. But that was his personal kindness, not official orders. Our Civil Inspector was a very good-natured man, whom we called Bon-bon; first, because we never got comfortably at his unpronounceable German name, and secondly, because he was quartered at a celebrated bon-bon shop, where he distinguished himself by his quiet, regular habits and his kind, cheerful manner. His entertainers were violently French, and never attempted to conceal their feelings; but Herr Bon-bon took it all in good part, lived on terms of the greatest friendship with the whole family, breakfasting and dining with them every day, and when he departed was universally respected and lamented.

Whether it was that we were peculiarly

fortunate in the officers we had to deal with, or whether it was the fact of our neutrality, I cannot say; but from all, with very few exceptions—one at Balan, one at Versailles, and one at Orléans—we received the greatest courtesy and kindness. Still, we were more quiet before Dr. C—— arrived. His little worrying ways annoyed us, and we felt, besides, how heavy a burden was the support of his staff on the already impoverished resources of the Sisters. At St. Marc lived one doctor and three or four clerks, with us three Infirmiers and three servants, and they could not, or would not, rough it as we did. Besides, men were sent in only fatigued and foot-sore, not wounded or really sick, and, being continually changed, imposed much additional labour and expense. The Sisters would never allow the sheets to be used a second time. This may seem an unnecessary piece of dandyism; but it was only a part of a system of exquisite cleanliness to which must be attributed the

fact that we never had an epidemic in the Ambulance of St. Marc, and our death-rate was far the lowest in Orléans—not four per cent.

Every Saturday the wards and corridors were well scrubbed down. Sister St.-Antoine led the charge at the head of a band of French Infirmiers, and the Germans, whose habits are of the dirtiest kind, looked on in wonder at the buckets of water thrown about, at the displacement of every bed and table, and at the carbolic acid mixed with the water. We had taken out carbolic acid in crystals; these were dissolved and mixed with water. Each bottle made twenty-five quart bottles strong enough for the dressings, and we used it much diluted to wash down the floors. Every fever case was placed, as soon as discovered, in a separate building. Every case of wounds bad enough to be unpleasant was placed apart, and there was no Ambulance smell in the house. The patients were never left, day or night. They had regular meals, and

nothing between, except by special order, and then only a little good wine or a slice of bread and preserve. The Germans had newspapers. No French ones were allowed in Orléans, and we supplied the French with books, most kindly lent, without fee or reward, from the library of M. and Madame Blanchard, Rue Bannière. In all ways the citizens rendered us every possible assistance, furnishing us with many things concealed from German eyes, and we only regretted that our poverty prevented us availing ourselves more largely of their kindness, for rations often ran very short. We had about 500 men to feed, and that is no trifle with such a scarcity of provisions as existed.

But the French were so grateful and good-tempered. 'What can we ask more?' they said. 'We have all you have. We have a good roof over our heads, good beds, clean shirts, kind words. What matter weak soup and small pieces of meat? we are happy here.'

The Germans grumbled, and I had a process of reasoning to go through to convince them that out of nothing comes nothing; no bullocks, no beef; no flour, no bread; that we all fared alike, and we ought to be thankful we were not out in the snow, like the other poor creatures. After which exertion of eloquence they usually agreed in my view of the case. Indeed, in no single instance had we to complain of the conduct of any one of them. Once one of the German servants got very tipsy and fell down in the garden, but the head Infirmier came and kicked him so dreadfully, telling him he disgraced his great nation before the English ladies, that I should say he never did it again.

No difficulties ever arose as regarded difference of religious opinion, though we literally had in the Ambulance Jews, Turks, heretics, and infidels—the Turcos being Mahometans, and, sad to say, many of the Germans utter unbelievers, while two of the officials were

Jews. The Mother Superior herself offered every facility if a Protestant chaplain were appointed for the Prussians; and no objection whatever would have been made to his holding a service in the Salle Jeanne d'Arc, which was entirely for the Germans. One did come, saw and conversed with the Protestants, and indeed went over the Ambulance. He paid a second visit, but that was all; and on my asking Herr Bon-bon why he did not come again, the Herr replied that the men did not care to have him there; when they were well enough they went to service by order on Sunday morning, but it was holiday when they were in Hospital. A Prussian Commandant on one occasion asked one of the Sisters who had gone with an Infirmier to get some requisition order signed, 'Do you try to convert the Protestants? Do you treat them just as you do the Catholics?' 'Certainly,' she answered. "Catholic or Protestant, they must eat, poor creatures; their religion is no

business of mine. I do the cooking, not the conversions!' But it *was* an extraordinary fact, that if ever there was any extra business, such as evacuating men, changing them from one ward to another, or making any fresh arrangements, it was always on a Sunday morning; so that it became a common saying amongst us, 'The pious King may look after his own soul; he does not give anybody else time to look after *theirs*.' And I must say that the needless work thus imposed upon all on the Sunday, the utter want of regard shewed for the day, set a very bad example to Catholics and Protestants alike, and certainly gave the French an odd idea of the Protestant religion. Nor was it caused by the fact of a Jew being chief with us, for the orders came from the General in command as regarded the evacuation of prisoners; and he could certainly have issued a general order, or caused the Physician-in-chief to do so, that in large Ambulances, where there were forty or fifty

Protestants, service should be performed for them on Sunday, and some respect for the sacred day enforced. But in this, as in many other things, we found Prussian piety a very 'whited sepulchre.'

That second week of January was indeed a dreary one. Every day distant sounds of cannonade were heard and prisoners arrived, taken in the battles which resulted in the occupation of Le Mans by the Germans. On one of these days an order was received for one thousand coffins for the use of the Prussian army, and I myself several times saw upwards of twenty large waggons in a line full of wounded, coming through the streets. The snow lay thick on the ground, a dense frost fog filled the air. Wood and provisions were scarcer than ever. The Prussians prevented all ingress to or egress from the towns. They had an idea that Bourbaki's army was coming on, and several times we were told of the French Lancers being seen only three or four miles

from the bridge over the Loire. Had the French come, there was not force enough to resist them, for even before the departure of Prince Frederick Charles the Germans were by no means easy as to their position.

So far back as New Year's Eve an alarm was given, which showed their consciousness of the likelihood of a surprise. At midnight the soldiers began to fire off their rifles, to salute the New Year. The Prince and his staff were carousing at the Prefecture, and hearing the sound, which indeed was exactly like the firing of the outposts when an attack commences, they decided that it must be the French, and hasty orders were given to saddle the horses. An enquiry, however, proved that it was only their own men; but we ascertained afterwards, in various places where the soldiers were quartered, that so deep were the potations they drank that night in honour of the New Year and 'Vaterland,' that Bourbaki would have had a

walk over the course 'if he had dashed in with some thirty thousand determined men.'

It was a very sad sight to see prisoners brought in. On the Thursday of that week there came through the Rue Bannière a strange procession—old men and women, little children, carried in their mothers' arms, or toddling, wondering, by their sides, a priest in his soutane, a lady well dressed leading a child, several gentlemen, many artisans, labourers and domestic servants, male and female. Weary, foot-sore, half-frozen, they had walked over twenty miles in the snow, their guards on either side urging them forward, and even in the street, as they lingered, looking wildly around for help or pity, blows and harsh words roused them to stumble on a little faster. The poor lady, her rich black silk dress all draggled with mud, stopped to soothe her little daughter, who was crying with cold and pain, and a German guard roughly ordered her

'Vorwärts!' A murmur of disgust rose from the bystanders, and a Hessian officer who was looking at the scene from a balcony rushed down into the street, put the soldier aside, and offering the lady his arm led her into his own rooms. 'They are prisoners!' shouted the Captain of the guard.' '*I* will be reponsible for them,' was the brave young fellow's reply; 'you will find them here, in my care.'

Several old German officers standing by applauded his conduct. 'Mein Gott!' said one, 'what have these poor people done?' a question echoed around. It appeared that they were all the remaining inhabitants of a village where opposition had been offered to the advance of the troops, probably successful opposition; for this was sure to draw down summary punishment on such audacity. These poor people were therefore brought prisoners into Orléans, to be sent to Germany; but we heard that the feeling of the higher officials was so much against the proceedings

of the Colonel by whose orders the atrocity was committed, that they were shortly afterwards released. It was surely enough to have their homes entirely destroyed, to lose everything they had in the world, to be houseless in such cruel weather. Whatever lesson was needed by upstart little villages that tried to bar the invaders' way, utter ruin might seem sufficient to teach non-combatants the doctrine of non-resistance. It is a splendid thing to fight for 'Vaterland,' it is a noble deed to keep 'Die Wacht am Rhein,' to guard that sacred stream against all foreign foes; but it is an act punishable with death in those who take up arms to watch beside the Loire—death to themselves, destruction to their homes. Blot out that daring town or village from the map of France, burn down every humble homestead, bring out the petroleum casks to do the work more surely, drive old and young, weak women, little children, the priests of God and the helpless

ones of their flock, through twenty miles of deep snow, at the bayonet's point, and then sit round the blazing fires piled high up with the remains of costly chairs and choice furniture, and sing 'Die Wacht am Rhein!' When next English men and women hear that song, let them remember scenes like this, and ask, What is German consistency, and what her laws of war?

CHAPTER XIII.

PEACE.

As the hope of relief from the arrival of the French grew fainter and fainter, the distress all around deepened; the inhabitants of the Faubourg Olivet, just across the river, were driven out of their houses, which were required to be pulled down for the fortifications being constructed there, to prevent any sudden surprise by the French. There were large fruit gardens and orchards in this suburb the trees of which were cut down for firewood and military purposes, and the loss amounted to a couple of million of francs. Both bridges were mined afresh, and rumours were abroad every day that they were positively to be blown up that very afternoon. The reports

brought in by stray villagers, who occasionally got through the lines, ostensibly for the purpose of bringing fowls and vegetables for the Hotels where were Prussian generals, spoke of the defeat of Chanzy's army and the march of Bourbaki into Germany. If so, he certainly was not coming our way, and Orléans was to be left in the hands of her conquerors.

On Thursday, the 12th, I was crossing the Place Martroi, laden with oranges and biscuits for the Ambulance, when I was stopped by the passing of a crowd of French prisoners, some 1,500 in number. A scuffle took place just at the entrance of the Rue Bannière. A girl, looking out at a shop-door, recognised her brother in that miserable crowd, and darting out threw herself into his arms. The surprise was too much for the poor lad, worn out with his march from near Le Mans, and he fainted on the pavement. The guard kicked him to make him get up, the crowd of lookers-on interfered, and an officer passing on

horseback struck the brutal sentinel with his sword. The prisoner was carried into the shop, and probably transferred to an Ambulance, as he was evidently much too ill to go farther.

As I was turning away to return home, I caught the words, 'Ambulance Anglaise! allez tout de suite.' I stopped and saw several women, one of whom had a slip of paper in her hand, crowding round a stall on which were butter, allumettes, and biscuits. 'Did you want the Ambulance Anglaise?' I asked. 'Do you know where it is?' 'Yes,' said one woman; 'do you want to know? It is in the Faubourg St.-Marc.' 'Thank you,' I answered; 'but I live there. Is there anything I can do?' One woman seemed inclined to speak, the others checked her, thanked me, but said it was 'nothing.'

An hour or two after I reached home, one of the Sisters came up to our room with the Mother Superior, and showed a little note which had been brought by a stranger woman.

During the passing of the prisoners up the Rue Bannière, this woman said, there had been a stop, owing to a confusion on the other side, and one of the prisoners had taken advantage of this to scribble half a dozen words on the leaf of his pocket-book. Calling to the woman, who kept the stall at the corner, he begged them to take it to his aunt, at the Ambulance Anglaise, directly. This was the mystery I had come upon, and it was most unfortunate that the woman was prevented telling me, for thus valuable time was lost. The note was to the Mother Superior, from her nephew; he was amongst the prisoners, very ill, and about to be sent to Germany. He begged her to find him out, and to get leave for him to remain in Orléans as a prisoner. First, where to find this poor boy? Had I known of it when I was in the Rue Bannière, I should have followed the troop of captives, and watched into which churches they were put. Three churches were full of them, I

knew—St.-Paterne, St.-Laurent, and St.-Paul —and probably others; but now it was dark, and the difficulty would be great. We must get an order from some chief to enable us to reclaim this poor boy. We remembered then the kind message of Prince Louis of Hesse, to apply to him in any case of difficulty. Cinq-Francs was harnessed to the cart, and Louise being ill in bed with rheumatism, I started with La Mère Thérèse to the Prince's head-quarters on the Quai Cypierre.

We arrived. All was so lonely and quiet, I feared the Prince was absent; but the porter, a civil old Frenchman, said he was at dinner. I told him I had a note I much wished the Prince to get, and also to have a word of answer; but of course I would wait to send it in till he had dined. 'My orders are,' said the porter, 'to take to the Prince himself every letter as soon as it arrives. Ah heavens! how good and kind he is. No stealing here, no breaking up furniture; all quiet and respect-

able, like himself. But then he has an English Princess for his wife. Madame is of that country. Ah, he will be delighted ?! ' And off he trotted. We had not waited a moment, as it seemed, before an Aide-de-camp came out, his dinner napkin in his hand, and most courteously led us into the *salon* behind the dining-room, which, apparently, was the Prince's bed-room. His sword was hanging up, and some few coats and cloaks were lying about, a bright fire blazing, writing materials scattered about the table, and a large map open and thrown over a chair; but we remarked how neat and clean everything was, and, though the dining-room was only just beyond the folding-doors, how quiet; not the loud noise and shouting usually to be heard where Germans are congregated together. All bore the stamp of an orderly and gentlemanly establishment.

As we were looking round us and admiring the simplicity of the quarters, the door opened,

and a fair, tall, pleasant-looking man came in, dressed in a plain dark blue uniform coat, with only the Iron Cross hanging from the button-hole. It was indeed Prince Louis. I apologised for thus disturbing his dinner; to which he replied he had quite finished, and we then discussed the business which had brought us there, and which I had explained in my note. The Prince took the kindest interest in the case; he said he only regretted these prisoners belonged to Prince Frederick Charles, so that he had no power. Had they been his, he would have given the order directly consigning the lad to our guardianship, especially as he was not a regular soldier, had not even volunteered, but had been drawn three months before in the levy. We thanked him, and regretted it, too, and were about to leave, when he said, 'Stay; let me see. I will tell you what I think will do. Go to the Chief Inspector of your Ambulance, and ask him to claim this young man as Infirmier. Tell

him Prince Louis of Hesse advised you to do this, and I think, but I am not sure, that this will answer.' He then added, 'Do you know I passed you in the street the other day and bowed to you, but you did not see me?' I replied that really I had not recognised His Highness. To which he answered, 'No, of course not; but I recognised you. I saw you before at Ste.-Marie-aux-Chènes. You had another lady with you; she had a grey hat like yours' (touching the brim of the one I wore). 'It is an English hat; I have seen my wife wear one.'

After receiving a few more kindly assurances of his desire to assist us we took our leave, and la Mère Thérèse was full of delight at the Prince's cordial, cheerful way of speaking and the graceful simplicity of his manner. 'He is good,' she said emphatically, 'and he looks so.' The Queen ought to be very proud and pleased of the golden opinions won by her two German sons-in-law, in the midst of a

savage war, and in the heart of an invaded country. Most fully were they at least acquitted from any share in, or even any knowledge of, the hardships and cruelties inflicted on the miserable people by some of their subordinates. Both the Prince Imperial of Germany and Prince Louis of Hesse bore the highest character, and were welcomed in the towns they entered as protectors rather than oppressors. If the enemy must occupy a city, it was well, the poor inhabitants thought, that their chiefs should be brave and good men, who would deal justly with them, and who had the will and the power to prevent unauthorised acts of plunder and wrong, and the laurels of the two Princes are the proudest of all, for they are untarnished by the acts that too often disgraced the victors at this sad time.

When we left the Prince it was far too late to find our Inspector. We called, but he was out, where no one knew, and it was only

in early morning that the Mère sallied out again to find him. Then it was too late. The prisoners had started at daybreak on their way, but the poor lad did not long remain a prisoner, for, as we know, seven weeks after came the peace.

There was a large evacuation of French in the following week. We were very grieved to part with our men, but the weather was better, and no man was sent away who was really unfit to travel. Even rheumatism was accepted as an excuse, and several men went to bed and groaned piteously. One of them, when Dr. Kröner asked him if he was able to travel, said, 'Oh no; he was very ill with rheumatism.' 'Where?' asked the doctor. 'In my stomach, monsieur,' answered the patient. 'My friend,' said Dr. Kröner, 'if you had said anywhere else I would have believed you; but it is impossible to accept this. Really you must go.' The poor fellow had to get up and go, amidst the laughter of his companions, who called him 'pig' and 'wooden-head,' for

not having put his rheumatism into his knees.' It was a sad sight to see the men who had been nursed and petted in warm, comfortable wards drawn up in line in the long corridor, with their knapsacks on their backs, ready to march away. Every man sent from the Convent was duly provided with a flannel shirt and belt and a warm under-vest, a good wrapper round his throat, and a thick pair of socks, a large loaf of bread, and a flask of wine and water. No men, it was said, were turned out so well as ours. Their coats and trousers had all been washed and repaired, their boots mended, their belts and buckles cleaned, and they presented a neat, smart appearance, very different from the poor fellows who had been in the military hospitals.

The French Intendance had quite broken down; no attention was ever paid to the soldiers in Ambulance. On the contrary, the very morning after a German came in, the chief

clerk, 'Schwarzer Johann,' as he was called, from his black beard and gruff voice, came round and looked at every article of the man's dress, examining the soles of his boots and the buckles of his straps. Anything lost or worn out was replaced, ready by the time he left, so that he went out, as it were, repaired in health and equipment. The French had nothing but what we gave them, and the Sisters worked hard to patch their well-worn clothes. We had many little things to buy, buttons, buckles, tapes, and various odds and ends, and all trenched on our diminishing stock of gold, whilst we received daily appeals for assistance to the poor, who were actually starving. We wrote a letter which was published in the 'Times,' and the kind response to the appeal for help enabled us, as soon as the peace was declared, to gladden many a heart.

Day after day passed on, and at last we heard that Paris had capitulated, and an

armistice was arranged. After the first burst of anger and despair at the surrender of the capital, it was a relief to all to breathe tranquilly, as it were, for a time; but the relief came too late to heal one broken heart, that of M. Pereira, the Préfet of the Loiret. Despairing of being able to alleviate the sufferings of the population from the ravages of war, he fell into a bad state of health, and indeed it was this which saved him from being sent prisoner into Germany. He was a marked man, from his proclamations and speeches, in which he had always encouraged the sternest resistance to the invader. He was detained a prisoner in his own house in Orléans, but, contrary to the report in the city, he was not treated with harshness, and was attended by one of the first German physicians with all possible care and skill.

His funeral was a most imposing sight. The Mass for the dead was celebrated in the Cathedral, the Bishop officiating. So univer-

sally respected and beloved was M. Pereira, that when the coffin was taken out and placed in the open hearse prepared to receive it, it was followed to the cemetery by more than 3,000 of his fellow-citizens, nobles, gentlemen, bourgeois, and artisans, all in mourning. As the coffin was carried out of the Cathedral a German band was playing on the Place Ste.-Croix for the parade of some troops, but when it appeared, Prince Louis of Hesse ordered the music to cease, whilst himself and his staff stood bareheaded as the cortege passed down the Rue Jeanne d'Arc, amidst the mourning of all around; but there were many who felt as we did, that it was in mercy the dead man had been taken, that God Himself in His infinite love had broken the chain and set the prisoner free.

We had seen the good Bishop several times during this sad month. Though no longer a prisoner, his Palace was occupied as quarters by a Prussian General, and he him-

self had but two or three small rooms in which to live. Even his kitchen was taken possession of by the General's cooks, and his meals were prepared in a smaller one. On one occasion a German valet saw the Bishop's dinner-tray ready prepared to be taken to him. There was a basin of soup, a little roast bird, and a decanter of Bordeaux. 'Stop!' he cried to the Bishop's servant; 'I'll take that. My master has just come in, and is hungry; it will be a nice refreshment before his dinner;' and he actually walked off with it, the servant not daring to interfere. But the noble old Bishop bore all his sorrows and annoyances so gently, so patiently, so uncomplainingly, that even his oppressors learned to be ashamed of themselves, and owned that to be unkind to such a man was a hard service. Of one thing he could not complain, and that was any inequality in the disrespect with which religious edifices were treated; for if the Cathedral and churches

had been made into prisons, the Protestant 'Temple,' as it was called, had been turned into a Bavarian barrack. When we told the Bishop of this he looked sadder than ever, but simply said, 'What do these men respect? not even their own faith!'

The armistice was truly a relief to all, not that it made any difference with the Germans, except that there was no fighting. We had an old-fashioned idea, and so had several military friends, that during an armistice all things remained in *statu quo*; but now troops were moved in all directions, prisoners were sent off to Germany, and heavy requisitions made as before it began. We exchanged some prisoners; about fifteen French out of our houses were sent to Vierzon, the first French post, to form part of the number exchanged for Bavarian and Prussian prisoners at Pau. But on the French side the management was infamous. The poor fellows arrived at Vierzon, to wait for military passes to rejoin their depôts;

and there they were, no one to receive them, houseless and dinnerless, sleeping in barns and stables, and begging their daily bread, for several days, till at last they were sent on to their depôts. Several of our men refused to go under such conditions and preferred taking their chance of peace setting them free.

After the surrender of Paris the *corps d'armée* of the Prince Imperial came to Orléans, ready to be sent on to the front if the war continued. The entrance was a sad sight for the Orléanais: for an hour and a half regiment after regiment poured down the street, amidst the triumphant music of their bands. There always was an idea that the Germans magnified their force, by marching their men out of one faubourg and in by another, and really we half believed that they had done so on this occasion, for there was a strange similarity between some of those who passed first and some who came last. The people stood by in stern silence, but oaths of

vengeance were sworn that day which may yet have a dark fulfilment. 'Dogs! canaille!' were the muttered words around. 'See if we spare old or young, woman or child, when we ride through Berlin.' Many wept bitter tears, and surely in this hour of, at all events, temporary peace, this public entry was an unnecessary addition to their humiliation.

Some of the new Generals, too, gave themselves great airs. One day we heard that two of our Infirmiers, Zouaves, had been arrested for not saluting a certain gallant General, who shall be nameless, as he rode down the Rue Jeanne d'Arc. We started off directly to the city, found our two friends prisoners for twenty-four hours in the Mairie, and looking piteously out of an attic window. From the third Infirmier, who was with them (not a Zouave), we heard that really they had not seen the great gentleman, and also they did not know they were compelled to salute him, as they themselves were all *sous-officiers*, and

the German privates did not salute them. On enquiry of the Commandant de Place it appeared that the General had been hissed on the Quai du Châtelet by some Zouaves, and he had resolved not only to arrest them, but also every Zouave whom he could catch. The affair made a great deal of excitement and ill feeling, and as the Commandant's secretary told me that an order from the General would obtain their release, I resolved to ask him for one. He was out. I waited an hour. On his arrival he went to his own room, and an aide-de-camp asked me my business. I explained; said that my Infirmiers begged to apologise, would not do so any more, had not seen the illustrious General, and were absolutely required for the service of the wards that night. He quite agreed, went in and spoke to the General, and coming back requested me to go in myself to see him. Of that interview the less said the better. There was champagne on the table, and the General was very

red in the face. He told me I might have two of his servants, and if they did not do the work properly, I might flog them! In short, he refused to release the men, and I left utterly disgusted with his conduct. They were released next day; but I should advise any office to decline taking an insurance on that General's life when next he meets the Third Zouaves, and I really must say he would be no loss to the German army.

The armistice drew to its end, and there was no certain news of peace. On the morning of Sunday, 26th February, the 'Wandering Jew' arrived, and ordered every Frenchman in the Ambulance to be ready to leave at three P.M. We found the Infirmiers were included, and Dr. Kröner declared they should not and could not go. We should still have fifty sick and wounded left, and not a man to do the service of the wards; besides, several of them held Prussian commissions as Infirmiers, and clearly had no right to be sent away as

prisoners. All we could obtain, however, was that a list of ten should be taken, that the men named on it might be returned. Dr. Kröner was very vexed; but Dr. C—— was imperative. Dinner was ordered for noon precisely, but it had hardly been served up before orders came for every man except the Infirmiers to go in marching order to Ste. Marie. We hurried them off, and went with them ourselves. Arrived there, Dr. C—— asked, 'Where are the Infirmiers? They must come, too.' Dr. Kröner said to me, 'Send them over; it is only to take down their names.' I ran back and sent them. Then came fresh orders. They were to go with the rest to the Bureau of the Commandant de Place; they must have their cloaks and knapsacks. We all ran about to collect them, and a most amusing scene it was to see the Sisters struggling across the garden, one with a knapsack, another with a great coat, another with a bundle.

About three all were assembled; the names

of the Infirmiers were taken down, and Dr. Kröner sent back every man he could on any excuse. I asked him what all this was for, and he told me the armistice ended at midnight. There were no tidings of peace, and a long train of prisoners was to start next day unless fresh news came; but what grieved him was that the men were to be put in the Church of St. Euverte. This was the church which the Anglo-Americans had occupied. As predicted, both ventilation and means of warming it were deficient. The cold was intense, and the mortality very large. They had been obliged to evacuate it, by order, and it had been pronounced terribly infected. Some prisoners had been put in, and several had been seized with fever. It was infested with vermin, which had made their appearance after the Ambulance left, and the whole place was in a filthy state—most unfit for quarters for men fresh out of hospital. But there was no help for it, and our hearts were very heavy as

we saw patients and Infirmiers ranged in line, ready to start. Everyone had something to say. We had shared their joys and sorrows, had watched by their bedsides, and heard their tales of home. We had looked over their games of dominoes and écarté, and sympathised in their want of news and short commons, and they had given us all the help they could; some by content and patience in most trying circumstances, some by active service. They were friends now, each with his own individuality.

It was very sad to bid them thus good-bye, for ever, most probably; and, to add to the sadness, down came all the Germans who could walk, from St. Marc's, to shake hands with their French comrades, and give them addresses in far-away German towns of friends who would be kind to the prisoners. The guard had not arrived, and there they stood waiting, when one of them remembered a book he had left. I ran back to fetch it, and

at the door of St. Marc's was nearly knocked over by a breathless Hessian, calling to me to stop. 'Peace! peace! the peace is signed!' he gasped out. 'They need not go; if they do, they'll all come back to-morrow.' 'Can it be true?' I asked; 'how do you know it?' 'Madame, I was lunching with my cousin, a Protestant pastor; I went with him to the General's; he was to say the service there; the General had just had the despatch from Versailles. It is true, but the official news is not here; that is, it will not be published till late to-night.' He gave me the names so truthfully I could not doubt, and I ran back into the yard of Ste. Marie. The guard were there, the men from Pomme-du-Pin and the Bon Pasteur outside. 'The peace is signed!' I cried. My Hessian friend had followed, and we explained how the news had come to us.

A wild scene of joy occurred. The Germans shouted and embraced the French, the French screamed and hugged the Germans, and everybody cried for joy. But the 'Wan-

dering Jew' was inexorable. He had been ordered to send in his prisoners that night, and go they should. Dr. Kröner *subtracted* several quietly, and at last the rest were marched off; but they went very gaily, for there was hope now. The Salles looked very dreary that night. The Germans who could walk helped us to serve the dinners, but what with anxiety and fatigue, and uncertainty if the good news was really true, we had little or no sleep that night. Our poor boys, too, were in that miserable, infected church.

It was barely daylight before Sister Ste.-Marthe brought our coffee and a message. 'The boys at St. Euverte were all waiting for "Les dames anglaises." They had seen a little girl passing, and had sent her to say so.' We dressed directly, and, accompanied by the Sister, we started. The church was just over the railway-bridge, and in the yard around it we caught sight of 'our boys' looking out for us. They saw us, and a rush to the front

gate ensued. Of course we were let in, and were surrounded by a mob of soldiery, all friends of ours, and all exclaiming they were so tired and so hungry they had not slept, and they had said in the middle of the night they were sure we had not. An officer had most kindly come at midnight and told them of the peace. Why were they kept prisoners there? We promised then to go and see about it, and first of all went and bought bread, wine, and tobacco. We called at the French Intendance; they were utterly helpless. If we could get the men let out before next day, when the orders from Versailles would be there, well and good; *they* could not.

It was so evident there was no hope there that we resolved to go to the Commandant de Place; but first we took our stores to the church, and catching hold of the head Infirmiers from St. Marc, Ste. Marie, and Pomme-du-Pin, gave the wine and bread into their charge. The Infirmiers called out for the

men of their own Ambulances to assemble by three pillars, and began to distribute provisions. A cry was raised, 'Vive Ste. Marie! Vive l'Ambulance Anglaise!' and the poor creatures from other houses crowded round. We were glad to see that our men gave liberally to all who asked, and presently after, the Little Sisters of the Poor brought some coffee and bread for their patients; and bread and coffee also came down from our Convent, in charge of Sister Ste.-Hélène, who, hearing of the distress of the men, had hastily made what coffee she could, and brought it to the church.

I went off and met our chief German Infirmier, a very gentlemanly sous-officier, with warm French sympathies, looking for me. He said, 'Come with me. This will not do; the men will get furious. Come to the Commandant de Place.' We arrived, and the Commandant quite agreed that, if we would be responsible for the men, till he gave them over to the French Commandant, it would be

better that they should go home to their various Ambulances, but referred us to the Chief Director of Ambulances. To him we went, and I begged for the men of the Ambulance Anglaise to be allowed to come back and remain with us till final orders were received transferring them once more to French rule. He smiled and said, 'I would most willingly, for that Ambulance has been very kind to our men; but if I give you all your men (you have about 200) I must let all the others go.' 'Then let them go,' I said; 'it is only the difference of half a dozen hours—very much to them, nothing to you. Please sign a little bit of paper, and let them all go back to their Ambulances.'

The good old doctor laughed, signed a bit of paper, and gave it to my German attendant; he touched his cap and ran off. I began to thank the doctor; but he said, 'Run off, make haste, or you will miss a scene.' I *did* run, and arrived opposite the churchyard gate just as the German *sous-officier* rushed in

telling the sentinels to stand aside. He ran into the church waving the paper, and before I could enter I was all but carried away by the crowd as the French poured out of the gates in ecstasies of joy. I clung to the gateway, calling out, 'Men of St. Marc and Ste-Marie, home to breakfast!' and every man obeyed. But it was a race; the German and myself headed it over the bridge, but were overtaken by a feather-weight Chasseur d'Afrique and a couple of Gardes Mobiles, who, arriving first at the convent door, thundered upon it. Good Sister Ste-Marthe opened the wicket by the cord, as usual, and looked out, and when she saw the scene up the road she called out, 'They are all coming back!' and ran into the halls to summon everybody to welcome 'the boys.' The Chasseur helped to throw open the large doors, and in trooped the returning soldiers, met by a rush of the French and Germans still left, while good Sister St.-Antoine, standing in the middle of the road, extended

her arms wide to receive her 'children,' crying out, '*Ah, mes enfants, mes enfants*, you are here! it is true!' Such a scene of honest, heartfelt joy I never saw; everybody had tears in their eyes. It was indeed the blessing of peace.

The days that followed were quiet and tranquil, and it now became our duty to try and relieve the sufferings of the peasantry around. We resolved, before the Ambulance broke up, to revisit the places we had seen on those sad December days, and decided that our first excursion should be to Cercottes and Chevilly. The men in Ambulance were allowed perfect liberty to walk about the city. We applied to the French Intendant for boots, and with success; and now that the weary war was over, we gave every man as he left such clothes as he needed, the Germans too, but they were so well supplied that they rarely required anything. We had still many severely wounded, and to leave for a month or six weeks was impossible; but everything

seemed changed and cheerful. Pretty things were to be seen once more in the shop windows, provisions and fuel were brought freely into the town, everybody was gay and good-humoured. All around we saw and felt that it was PEACE.

CHAPTER XIV.

A GERMAN FUNERAL PYRE.

THE welcome help we had so earnestly prayed for had come. Kind hearts in England had responded to our appeals, and we resolved to commence our tour round the desolated villages of the Loiret by going to Cercottes and Chevilly on the direct road to Paris. The three days' battle had commenced at Artenay on the 1st of December, on the 2nd advanced to Chevilly, and on the 3rd to Cercottes, and all these villages had suffered fearfully. But things were very much changed on that sunny 4th of March from the sad winter day when we had gone out to seek the wounded there. It was peace now. Though German soldiers

occupied the villages, and though the houses showed the ravages of war, the fields were cultivated, the little gardens being repaired, and women and children visible once more. We took with us the young Zouave we had found in the farm at Cercottes, who was delighted to be our attendant, and with his crimson fez and embroidered jacket was quite a picturesque object. We drove slowly through the long faubourg and on the straight road leading from Les Aydes to Cercottes.

We did not stop there, but went straight on to Chevilly, and halted at the little house of the Sisters of St. Charles. There an English lady of a good Norfolk family, the friend I had met on the 6th of December, was still Superior of the Sisters. She was out, seeing some sick people in the village, but was sent for; and meantime one of the Sisters received us with most graceful cordiality, and showed us the ruin effected in their house by the Prussian soldiery. It was but a small building, with

outhouses added to it; a school for poor children, where the absolutely destitute are lodged, boarded, and clothed for nothing, and others for what they can pay, the average being about two pounds a year. The good Superior had laid in her little winter stock. Butter being cheap in autumn, she had bought some and salted it down. She had made her store of preserves, and begged blankets and clothes for her little ones. Then came first the occupation of October. That was not so terrible. They had some sick in the house, and it was respected; besides, the Bavarians, who at that time took Orléans, were far gentler and kinder to the Sisterhoods than the Prussians. This may be accounted for by their being mostly Catholics, and naturally having a sympathy with the good works of their co-religionists.

On the 3rd of December the battle was close around them. Shot and shell passed over them, and one shell burst in a class-room,

scattering some hundred bullets through the room. Fortunately, no one was there; the little children had fled with their parents into Orléans, and not a soul was hurt. But when the battle was over, and the French had retreated into the last trenches close by the city, the Germans occupied the village and took possession of the house. They cut down the doorways with their swords, to make them large enough for their horses to enter, and occupied the lower floor as stables. In vain the Sisters pleaded that something might be spared them; every single thing was taken, even the spectacles of the Superior, the scissors, boxes of cottons, and tatting materials of the Sisters. All the blankets and counterpanes were stolen, and the black serge gowns of the nuns cut up for wrappers for the soldiers' throats. In one night they consumed forty pounds of butter and nearly all the preserves. They tore off the leaves of the school desks and the doors for fuel, and burnt

up the school benches. They even took the children's clothes, and when the Sisters begged them to spare these useless things they would not hear a word, and actually took away the tiny socks and shoes. 'Spare these,' said the Sisters; 'these belong to the poor.' 'We are poor, too,' was the reply. The Superior went to the Mairie, where the commanding officer was installed, and prayed him to restrain his men. She was only met by a rough denial, and returned to her ruined home hopeless of redress or help. The windows were broken, the closets and drawers forced open with bayonets, and wanton and cruel damage committed, whilst the Sisters pleaded in vain that they would spare what was really the property of the poor of the village. For three days they had nothing to eat, except the broken bits of bread they picked up, and scraps of meat thrown away by the soldiers, which they washed and made soup of.

And now, though the worst was passed, poverty and destitution were their lot for many

a long weary month. The children had come back to their home—for such it was—and it was a hard struggle to keep them, and surely the moderate assistance we could give was never more needed than here. To replace some of their bedding and children's clothes was indeed a great boon to them, and many a heart was gladdened by the assistance sent from England in time of need. The Sister produced some bread, wine, and preserve, and we did not like to refuse the hospitality so freely offered. We promised to return when we had visited the Mairie, and there we accordingly went. It looked far brighter and more cheerful than on that terrible day in December when it was crowded with wounded. The rooms were still disarranged, the furniture strewed about here and there, and some few invalid soldiers had their beds in a *salon*. They had not forgotten us, nor how the Ambulance Anglaise brought them the first bread and wine after three days' living on rice.

From thence we walked with Madame H—— through a pretty little wood, or rather shrubbery, where, as she told us, at this time last year, snowdrops, violets, and primroses carpeted the ground; but all were gone, and tramp of men and horse had trodden the earth into a hard, rough mass, like a dry ploughed field. We called at the house of Madame D'A——. It was still full of Prussians, and the family, fifteen in number, had only one sitting room. Though peace was signed and requisitions done away with, two German surgeons quartered there were most disagreeable, and claimed all kinds of provisions, whilst a major, also in quarter there, was very kind and considerate. All through the sad times at Orléans it seemed to depend entirely on the private character of the officers, rather than any settled rule, what the poor, wretched inhabitants had to supply to their conquerors. The house had had a narrow escape, and a beautiful creeper in front had its stem severed

by a ball. They spoke of the awful trial the last six months had been, and of the 2nd and 3rd of December, of the dead strewed about their garden and in the little wood, where the violets should be blooming now, and the dying who crawled into the village for shelter from the bitter night and the falling snow. They told us how many a poor soldier, they feared, still lay unburied amongst the brushwood in the forest of Orléans, which extended behind and around the village. Hidden amongst the grass and shrubs many, doubtless, perished from cold; and they told us, too, how the wolves scented their prey, and, leaving the forest, prowled even almost into the village, adding to the terrors of the scene by their howls. God grant that hunger and frost had ended the agonies of the poor wounded in the forest before that savage pack tracked them in the recesses of the wood-paths.

When we returned to the house of the Sisters of St. Charles we found the Superior

there, and having given the small sum intended for the repair of the school-room and the purchase of a few blankets and clothes, we were about to take leave, when she begged us not to go without having seen the farm of Andeglou. We walked with her up the village street. There were Prussians in every house, and all trade and employment was at a stand-still; but very few, if any, wounded were left there. We turned off to the right and came on the open country. The forest was close by in the background, and a level, open space before us, of what had once been cultivated fields. To our left, the ground rose gently, and on it stood a roofless, lonely building, the gables clearly drawn out against the blue sky. It formed one side of a square enclosure. The central court, in the midst of which was a well, was entered by a large doorway, where once had been gates; to the left, the farm-house, with stone steps up to it, and beyond it, forming the other side of the square, the

stables. Facing us was a large barn, and the square was completed by another large barn, the buildings on our immediate right being also storehouses or barns. All was in ruins, and we picked up a bit of shell just by the entrance. Unfortunately, the farm stood on the highest level of the plateau, directly in the line of fire between the French and Prussian batteries, and the loss of men around it had been great on both sides. It had suffered much in October, but its utter ruin was only completed in December. The ravage and destruction in the house were frightful. Besides the shot which had entered, leaving gaps in the wall, pillage had done its worst. Not a single article of furniture was left; torn papers strewn about everywhere, the staircases were nearly destroyed, not a window, and the marks of violence plainly to be seen all around.

The Germans had an idea that French soldiers were hidden in the farm, and they

dashed open the doors to seek for them. Several shells had fallen on the house, and set fire to it here and there, but the flames had been extinguished by the farmer, who, with one or two of his men, had remained on the spot. The Germans, however, took entire possession of the buildings, and then came the saddest scene of all. Throughout the war we had always found how anxious the Germans were to conceal their enormous losses. Their published telegrams will prove this, as they always far understated the real loss both of killed and wounded. They always buried their dead instantly, and sent back their wounded to the ground in their own occupation, if not beyond the Rhine. On this occasion there was no time to dig graves for the dead, and no means of sending large numbers of very badly or mortally wounded to the rear. The battle was not ended. It had gone forward, so to speak, sweeping over the country towards Orléans like an advan-

cing wave, and every man was pressed on to the front. The dead were therefore collected and placed in heaps in two of the barns, in which were still one thousand sacks of wheat, besides quantities of corn, hay, and mangold-wurzel. Many wounded had been placed there, and they were hurriedly removed, and the soldiers set fire to the barns. They did not burn quickly enough, and some casks of petroleum which they had with them, were broken open and poured upon those sad remains of humanity. The flames roared fiercely, like a furnace; no one could approach the burning buildings that shot up columns of fire to the dark night sky; and that was a German funeral pyre!—that the dishonoured, unknown grave of upwards of three hundred of Germany's best and bravest soldiers. No word of prayer spoken above them, no stone to mark the spot. The roof that crashed in upon the dead, was the substitute for the earth that should have been lightly and reverently

piled over the remains of gallant men, who had fought and fallen for the glory of 'Vaterland.' Nothing left but a huge mass of calcined ashes, showing too plainly the traces of human bones, mixed with fused metal, cloth, and grease. But a darker horror still is spoken of in hushed tones. As the soldiers left the burning farm and went on their way, the farmer and his men crept out from their hiding-place. Something might yet be saved, but the flames beat them back, and they turned and fled in terror, for groans and shrieks were heard, and they knew that dead and dying were mingled together in that fiery furnace. Not all the wounded had been carried off. Many were doubtless insensible from loss of blood, and there was no time to look closely into all such cases. Would that we could hope that this was but an idle tale. It is a dark reality. We brought home with us some of the charred remains. There were many things in the war, hearing of which and seeing which

one could but feel that temporary success might follow; but no blessing could ever rest on Emperor or King or nation, German or French, by whose soldiers such things were done. And surely the farm of Andeglou may be placed in the dark catalogue of such deeds. After this, all minor horrors seemed as nothing. The corpse of the sheep-dog, wantonly shot in the stable, the stealing of thirty cows and six horses, these were merely accidents of war; but as we turned back and looked at the ruined farm, it seemed haunted by a hideous remembrance of wordless agony and crime, and to stand gaunt and blackened in the bright spring afternoon—a place stamped with a dark shadow that no sunshine can ever brighten.

We left Chevilly saddened and depressed, and drove back to Cercottes. The Curé gave us a sad history of the sufferings of his little village since we had been there. The quartering of soldiery, and the constant requisitions, had

crushed the poor to the earth. The love of the Germans for huge fires had brought about the burning of all palings, doors, even agricultural implements, of which 384 were destroyed in this village alone; and after three months of the misery entailed by an already impoverished Commune having to feed and support many hundred soldiers, there arrived one day a commanding officer, with a demand for 12,000 francs (480*l.*), when certainly there were not 12,000 pence in the village. The Mayor was in Orléans, and had left his affairs in the hands of the Curé, who was very busy preparing for the services of next day, which was Ash Wednesday. The Curé was horrified, and told the officer it was utterly impossible to pay that sum. The officer said that something must be given to satisfy the Préfet. What was the highest sum that Cercottes could pay? The Curé said there were about a hundred houses. If, on an average, each family would pay ten francs, it was quite as much or more than they

could do. That would be 1,000 francs. The officer said it was not enough; more must be given. If not, there were three ways of compelling payment—firstly, pillage of the commune; secondly, the quartering of an additional number of soldiers; and thirdly, the taking the principal people of the village prisoners into Orléans as hostages for the whole sum. The Curé remonstrated against any of these agreeable alternatives, and said that ever since October the village had been reduced to the greatest poverty. First, the French soldiers had been quartered there, then the Bavarians, then the French again, then the Prussians, but no one had ever been so hard before; and when the French were there they ate and drank much less than the others. On this the officer was furiously angry, and proclaimed the Curé his prisoner. The Curé replied he was ready; but might he eat a morsel first? It was already prepared, and would the captain share it with him? It

was indignantly refused, and the poor Curé, hungry and tired, had to tramp three miles to Orléans by the side of the troopers' horses, and was shut up in the Mairie. There he passed twenty-six hours. The Commandant de Place, before whom he was brought, said that probably there had been too much vivacity on both sides; however, he was not liberated till next day, when the captain himself came to let him out, saying that it was only a misunderstanding arising from too much vivacity. The payment of the money was never enforced on Cercottes, and it is probable the vivacious captain had received a reprimand for a proceeding that looks exceedingly like buccaneering or highway robbery, and was *perhaps* a lively idea of his own, unauthorised by the Préfet or any high military authority.

Cercottes was, perhaps, one of the most oppressed of all villages; always crowded with troops, on the high road to Paris, and in the midst of three or four battles. The list

of destroyed blankets, clothes, sheets, and household goods is something almost incredible. A little assistance towards purchasing bread for the poor actually starving was most gratefully received, and we were assured that the Curé and his flock would not forget to pray for the welfare of England.

We then drove on towards Orléans; we passed the lonely grave around which I had seen the bodies lying on the 6th December. No one had ever claimed that of the captain of the Foreign Legion, which the Curé had placed so carefully on the top. Perhaps he is being waited for now in some far away country, and his near and dear ones do not know of his grave on the battle-ground of Orléans. We stopped at the farmhouse where Père Guérin and myself had found the young Zouave. How glad the good old couple were to see him, and how warmly they received us all! the farmer's wife saying in her graceful French way, 'Remember me well to thy

mother, my boy, though I do not know her.' They were astonished to see how stout and rosy he had grown, and how actively the lad who had left them hardly able to crawl to the carriage, could help us in, shut the door, and jump upon the box, gaily waving his cap as we drove down the lane.

It was dark when we re-entered Orléans, but there was no being stopped by sentinels and asked all sorts of questions, no fear of gates being shut and our being left to pass the night in some miserable cabaret in the Faubourg. No fear, on our return, of finding that some of our poor fellows had been hurried away as prisoners. In every little detail it was Peace, not War; and what a difference that makes no one who has not lived amongst such scenes can tell. All was cheerful and quiet. Lights blazing from every window of the long corridors, the soldiers passing up and down, carrying the supper into the halls, and our own cheerful little room ready to receive us.

CHAPTER XV.

A GALLANT LITTLE TOWN.

If Bazeilles was the saddest scene of the war, in its entire destruction, the fate of Chateaudun will excite even warmer sympathy. Place that brave little town in the midst of our English land, picture to yourselves Englishmen defending wife and child, hearth and home, against a foreign invader, and the name of Châteaudun would never be heard in any public assembly ungreeted by those ringing cheers that meet the recital of acts of heroism and self-devotion whenever they are told to our countrymen and women. It was early in the autumn when this sad scene occurred. Bazeilles was burned on the 1st

of September, Châteaudun on the 18th of October; yet in a letter, signed R. Loyd-Lindsay, dated January 2, and published in the 'Standard' *January* 3, 1871, we read as follows:—

'A number of English gentlemen of high character, some of them soldiers, are acting as reporters to the English press at the seat of war, and, like their brethren at home, are not only keen to mark anything that may be done amiss, but also prompt and ready to place on record the good deeds which may come under their notice. Thus, like the bards of the Middle Ages, who, while they incited the knights to do their utmost, gave them a place and a name to be remembered in history. *While the keenest eyes that can be found have been watching the war, there has not been detected any act of wanton barbarity or premeditated cruelty during the whole of this invasion of France by the Germans.* But though England has not had cause to cry shame upon

anything which the writers at the seat of war have made public, she has been called upon to point out that much which ought to be done in civilised warfare remains on both sides 'undone.'

But let us see how, in reality, the bards of the nineteenth century write of the Colonel's German friends. They tune their minstrel harps, and chant the following lay to the glory of the Teuton knights. Mr. W. H. Bullock, writing to the 'Daily News' on *the 9th of November*, 1870, says: 'The burning of Bazeilles was *an act of vengeance wreaked on victims of whose innocence I have been at the utmost pains to convince myself.*' He goes on to speak of Beaurepaire, a little hamlet burnt by the German troops: 'that women and little children were unhoused at the beginning of winter, besides losing the bulk of their linen, clothes, and bed furniture, which is, as a rule, plundered first by the German soldiers, and then sold by them to the Jews and others who

are reported to follow the camp.' An admirable article in the 'Quarterly' of January, 1871, gives also extracts from the letter of a French pastor, for whose credibility the writer can vouch, first published in the 'Times,' whose sickening details of cruelty and barbarity in the neighbourhood of Dreux can be well corroborated by our own researches in and around Orléans. In one sentence he says, 'So great is the terror they inspire, that we hear on all sides of suicides.'

But to return to Châteaudun—and we hereby beg Colonel Loyd-Lindsay and all who may read this work to take notice that we relate no single occurrence that cannot be vouched for on official authority, and we give our authors' names for all details of the October massacre. 'Châteaudun,' saith Murray, 'is a town of 6,781 inhabitants, on the banks of the Loire.' It is a station on the line from Paris to Tours, *viâ* Vendôme, and, with its old castle crowning it, stands picturesquely, where the

gradual rise of the flat land around it slopes perpendicularly down on the north side to the river, beyond which is the Faubourg of St. Jean. The Prussian attack was from the south and east sides, where they took advantage of rising ground to plant their batteries.

The history of the defence, written by L. D. Coudray, of Châteaudun, from his own personal experience and official documents, gives many interesting details, and commences by showing the unblushing falsehood of the account given in the 'Times' by its Berlin correspondent. From the first incursions of the invader over the fertile plains of the Beauce Châteaudun prepared to give them a warm reception. The National Guard was organised and armed, and a body of Francs-tireurs arrived from Tours. One word as to these Francs-tireurs, so detested by the Prussians. They were men recruited from all ranks and classes, nobles and their servants, farmers and their labourers, gamekeepers, soldiers, 'en retraite,'

country gentlemen, clerks, mechanics, and artisans. Most of them were splendid shots, and the guerilla system of warfare they adopted is the very one so often pointed out as the way in which our Rifle Volunteers, sheltered behind the numerous hedges of Old England, could hold a foreign foe in check, and carried out exactly the orders given by the 'Landsturm-Ordnung' of 1813, as published in Prussia. This orders them to shoot at their enemies from behind houses and hedges, and inflict every possible injury on them; but the French did not go as far as these orders authorise the Prussians to do, for they always retained their uniform, and did not, as the Landsturm are ordered to do, 'lay aside their distinctive caps and belts, when the enemy appears in force, and assume to be simple inhabitants.' These orders are still in force in Prussia, yet the Germans on all occasions treated the Francs-tireurs as brigands, and a general order was published

forbidding the German army to take them prisoners, but to shoot them down whenever they showed themselves.

However, a small body of this dreaded force, about 900 men, under a Polish Colonel named Lipowski, arrived in Châteaudun on the 29th of September. On the 10th of October the first Uhlans were seen, and on this day a small detachment of Prussian cavalry was attacked at Varize, a small village near Châteaudun, and put to flight. On the 14th 200 Prussian troops returned and were again defeated, and whilst retreating through Civry, a neighbouring village, were attacked, and left many men dead. Next day 800 Prussian cavalry arrived at Varize by the only road which traverses the marshes around it. They prevented all escape, and the frightened women and children hid amongst the tall grass of the marshes whilst the few National Guards still held bravely out, and fifty Prussians were put *hors de combat.* The Prussians forced their

way in, pillaged every house in the town, and then set fire to them, aided by petroleum, which they seem always to have carried about with them, and, having thus punished Varize, proceeded to Civry, and did the same there. Of the sixty-two houses which composed the little town of Varize only two houses and the church remain, and these are damaged by fire.

Unwarned by the fate of these villages, Châteaudun resolved to defend itself, in spite of the decision of the commanders of the hussars, Gardes Mobiles, and Francs-tireurs quartered there, that defence was impossible; but the inhabitants and the National Guard considered this declaration as unnecessary, and Colonel Lipowski submitted a proposition to the sous-préfet to defend the town to the last extremity. The municipality would have declined the proposal, to save the town from pillage; but it was otherwise settled, and the preparations for defence were commenced. Barricades were erected at the entrance of the streets and walls pierced for musketry, and

1,300 National Guards and Francs-tireurs, with no cannon, prepared to hold Châteaudun to the death against General Von Wittich with 12,000 men and numerous artillery.

This General's name should be well remembered. He bore the reputation, and not unjustly, of one of the fiercest and most merciless of the Prussian commanders, and went in France by the name of the 'Butcher of Châteaudun.' It is this very General whose enthusiastic thanks to Surgeon Manley, of the War Office Ambulance, are quoted by Colonel Loyd-Lindsay in his letter of the 3rd January. He says:

'The work during all this period was most severe, and Surgeon Manley gives great credit to all there, both officers and men, who worked under him. The message which he received on one occasion from General Von Wittich shows that the services rendered by his Ambulance were thankfully accepted and appreciated by the *Prussian commanders*.

"Receive," said the General, "our heartfelt thanks for your most valuable aid, given to *us in the moment of our great need*, when *our own ambulances were not forthcoming!*"'

Thank God that when the bloody scene was over there was another Ambulance who came with help and protection to the poor citizens to work amidst the smouldering ruins 'to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, to visit the sick and the prisoner;' and though no Prussian thanks record its noble service, the little children of Châteaudun have learned to lisp a prayer for the Irish Ambulance and the good Dr. Baxter and Arthur Picard. We shall speak of them by and by.

To resume the sad story. At noon on the 18th of October the cry was raised, 'The Prussians, the Prussians!' and whilst the little garrison flew to arms the German army appeared on the south side of the town. The attack commenced at one o'clock by the firing of a shell, which struck the Town-hall, and immediately afterwards a hail of shot and

shell fell around it, and in the very heart of the place. The noise of falling chimneys and crashing roofs, the roar of cannon, the rattle of musketry, and the shrieks of women filled the air, whilst clouds of smoke and dust arose. The bombardment from that time never ceased till darkness closed in, and the Prussians meantime tried to force their way past the barricades. About two in the afternoon the Prussian batteries were firing on the Convent of the Dames Blanches, the Sous-Préfecture, the Church of the Madeleine, and even the hospital, though the Geneva flag, displayed from its highest roof, was visible to every battery. About three P.M. a shell fell on the roof and penetrated to a hall full of wounded. One of these, who had suffered amputation only a quarter of an hour before, was so terrified that he fled, dragging himself down the staircase to the cellars, his wound bleeding afresh. Several of the shells were filled with petroleum and other explosive matters, and set fire to the houses as they fell.

About four o'clock nearly twenty houses were blazing, yet it was seven o'clock in the evening before the Prussians entered the town. A strong column forced their way up the Rue de Chartres, on their way to the Grande Place, and at eight o'clock the whole division marched in. Then began the deplorable scene that must for ever tarnish the laurels of the Emperor of Germany. All resistance had ceased, they were masters of Châteaudun, but the gallant little town had dared to resist, and its punishment must be such as to be a warning to other impertinent little places, that would not throw open their gates and welcome their cruel foe. Over some scenes it is well to pass lightly. The shooting of Gardes Nationaux and Francs-tireurs taken red-handed in the fight was, perhaps, a natural consequence of war. They claimed no immunity as 'simple inhabitants,' and met the fate of soldiers; but petroleum and pine-torches did the work of destruction too surely in the private houses

of unoffending women and old men. One André Martin, aged and bedridden, could not rise when the Prussian soldiers entered the room, ordering him to get up and leave the house, as they intended to burn it. His wife pleaded in vain that, being paralysed from head to foot, he could have taken no part in the battle. She was torn away from his bedside, fire was brought and piled under the bed, and the miserable victim expired in the midst of frightful torture; his charred remains were found, and bear witness to a deed the very savages would blush to own. Close by lived an old officer who in youth had fought in the Grande Armée of the First Napoleon. Still suffering from a wound which had crippled him, he too had taken no share in the defence. The Prussians entered his house, ordered him to leave it, as it must be burnt, and he remonstrated with them that this was not war; in all his campaigns he had never seen such things done. The answer

was a blow from the butt end of a musket. He was shot down on the threshold of his home, *unarmed* and unoffending, and his bleeding corpse thrown into the flames of his house. The 'Écho Dunois,' in the first number published after the peace dated the 9th of May, thus gives their deaths amongst a list of those who perished on the 18th and 19th of October, 1870:—

'André Martin, rentier, veuf, brûlé vif dans son lit par la main des Prussiens, 69 ans.

'Casimir-Étienne Michau, capitaine de cavalerie en retraite, chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, veuf, 73 ans: tué sur le seuil de sa maison.'

Can these things be read, attested as they are by those who saw them done, and yet men talk of '*no act of wanton barbarity or premeditated cruelty during the war!*' The hotel of the Grand Monarque was fired, the Prussians setting fire first to the long dining-room; in short, that night two hundred houses were

blazing, whilst the wretched inhabitants fled across the river, and took refuge in the suburb of St. Jean. The victory cost the Prussians dear; they lost from 2,000 to 2,500 killed and wounded, as acknowledged by their own officers, whilst the defenders amounted only to 1,300, and the town was held for eight hours against such enormous odds.

At break of day a few of the most courageous citizens crept back. Their return was unopposed, but what a sight met them! From every house that had been spared all its contents had been taken: wine, liqueur, linen, furniture, all were gone. Soldiers were quartered in the empty rooms, and demanded dinner and wine when there were none to give. Meantime General von Wittich was resolved that prisoners should grace his triumph, and about one hundred citizens were made captive and taken away to Germany. A list of their names is given in the 'Écho Dunois,' and not one is a soldier or Franc-tireur. They were

brought to Orléans, where the citizens, seeing them faint and weary, prepared some refreshment for them. It was immediately consumed by the German soldiery, who threw the broken pieces to their prisoners, and when the indignant Orléanais brought a fresh supply, they were met with threats and menaces. The inhabitants who remained were treated with insult and oppression. The halls of the College were turned into stables, the officer remarking to one of the Professors, 'Don't you feel very humiliated at seeing horses in your class-rooms?'

The Jews who accompanied the division stabled their heavy waggons in the factory Rainville, where they were loaded with the booty bought from the soldiery, and were then sent away to Germany. After the pillage came the demand for a money contribution. General von Wittich fixed it at 200,000 francs (8,000*l.*), an enormous sum for a half-burned and wholly ruined town, 1,500 blankets, 200

pounds of salt, 200 pounds of coffee, 400 litres of brandy, and 20,000 litres of hay. The poor people got together 30,000 francs, 110 blankets, the coffee and salt, and, finding it impossible to screw out more, the General was obliged to be contented with this.

The day after the battle, amidst smoking ruins and unburied bodies, the German bands played one of Strauss's valses, an air by Weber, and an overture by Wagner. How bitterly must the mourners have felt this mockery of their sorrow and desolation! The greater part of the German troops left on the 20th, but the town remained occupied by a small garrison. Several houses were fired just before they left, and one instance more may be given of wanton mischief. A German surgeon quartered in the house of a French resident medical man not only carried off the best of the surgical instruments of his unfortunate host, but broke those he did not care to take away. On the 20th also thanks were voted

to the town of Châteaudun by the Government at Tours, and 100,000 francs were granted to aid in repairing the damages, whilst nine of the heroic defenders, including Colonel Lipowski, received the Legion of Honour, and a street in Paris had its name changed from Rue Cardinal Fesch to Rue Châteaudun. 285 houses were completely destroyed; twelve only by shell, 193 were fired by hand, and the rest caught fire from the proximity of burning buildings. The entire loss of house property and furniture amounted to 5,000,000 francs.

The list of innocent victims amounts to twenty-eight civilians, five of whom were men in the prime of life, who perished in the burning buildings. One was a blacksmith, shot the day after the battle in the street because he did not answer a sentinel's challenge given in German, and one paragraph from the death-list will tell its own tale how father, mother, and children died together:—

'Louis-Joseph Saillard, carrossier, marié, 42 ans: asphyxie.

'Estelle-Uranie Menant, femme Saillard, 38 ans environ: asphyxie.

'Marie-Lucie Saillard, 13 ans 4 mois: asphyxie.

'Louise-Uranie Saillard, 2 ans 4 mois: asphyxie.'

Three servant-girls of one family were smothered in a cellar.

We had always had a great desire to visit this place, and one fine bright morning in March, the 8th, Louise and myself started for Châteaudun. It is about twelve leagues from Orléans; the country, a flat level, gave the exact impression of a brown sea with islets rising out of it, in the shape of small villages and isolated farms. Nothing could be drearier. We left Orléans by the long suburb leading to Les Ormes. The Germans had attacked on this side, and many houses were much damaged, especially at Les Ormes, which had suffered heavily from

pillage and requisition. Traces of earthworks were still visible, and it seemed to us, as we journeyed around Orléans and looked at the lines of defence, that a far more desperate resistance might have been made. Beyond Les Ormes we came on the open country, leaving about a mile on our left the village of Ingres, which, being unable to pay a heavy money requisition, had been given up to pillage, and where many acts of cruelty had been perpetrated.

We halted at Tournoisie, a little village half-way, to rest the horses, and entering the principal auberge, we asked for some *déjeuner*. The poor woman assured us that German troops had passed the night in the village, and eaten and taken everything away. Not a truss of hay was left, all had been carried off, and not one farthing paid for it; and this was after the peace was signed, when it had been specially arranged that no requisitions were to be made without payment. But resistance was useless

against armed and unscrupulous men, and the system was carried on to the last. Even the knives and forks had been stolen, and all we could have was some eggs and bread. We had some wine with us, and there was a little coffee. We gave something to replace the knives, and the poor woman said she hoped their troubles were nearly over now. The corps expected every moment to arrive in the village would be the last to pass through, and as they were Hessians, she hoped they would behave more mercifully than the Prussians. Everywhere we found it the same. The Prussians proper were considered by the French as the most cruel and the most detested of all the 'people and tribes' who made up the German army. Each of these 'tribes' disliked the others, and only agreed in one thing, jealousy of their head, Prussia; but this jealousy and dislike were far stronger on the part of the Bavarians than on that of any of the others.

We left Tournoisie after a rest of an hour,

and at four o'clock entered Châteaudun. It had changed masters twice since the day of its first capture, but on the 28th of November had been finally reoccupied by the Germans, and, to our surprise, was still in their hands, the evacuation not having been yet carried out. As this meant the occupation of every available quarter by soldiers, it was far from an agreeable discovery. It is a luckless little town. It was burned by the Orléanais in the sixth century, by the Normans in the ninth, was the centre of a war against robber hordes in the twelfth, was nearly destroyed by fire in 1783, and again, as we know, in 1870. Its old castle escaped through all these troubles; it was built in the tenth century, and was the residence of the Comtes de Dunois. It is now the property of the Duc de Luynes, and was being restored when the war broke out. It presents no appearance of decay, and as it stands, with its huge pile overlooking the town, is the very picture of a feudal castle.

As we drove slowly up the slope, we passed the railway station; it had been much injured, and a very large white building close by had been destroyed by fire, and was a mere empty shell. We proceeded up the Rue d'Orléans, and here burnt houses were visible on every side, and piles of ruins still encumbered the streets. We made our way to the Place Royale, or central square, and to the hotel whose sign-board announced it as Hôtel de la Place. It had been Hôtel Impérial, but that word was erased, and the host was waiting a permanent change of Government, or dynasty, to replace it. Will it be 'République,' or 'Royale,' or "Impériale' again? The hostess came out to greet us, and one word—that we were friends of M. Arthur Picard—secured us a warm reception. She had no room for us; but the head groom had a nice little house, not burned down, and we could have a room there. Meantime she would prepare our dinner. We

should have it quietly before those noisy Germans came in.

One word as to M. Picard, and the great service he rendered to Châteaudun, as our kind landlady told us the tale, whilst waiting on us at dinner. He was the 'comptable' or manager of the Irish Ambulance, which he had joined in company with Dr. Ryan shortly after our being at Tours where we met them. This Irish Ambulance was formed in Dublin and sent out to aid the French. It had no connection whatever with the so-called Irish Ambulance formed in London and dissolved at Havre, but it originally consisted of far too many dressers and Infirmiers, and its chief, Dr. Baxter, sent back two-thirds of them when he joined at Havre, where they had arrived from Cork. They entered Châteaudun when the Germans evacuated it, at the time the French retook Orléans, and were there on the re-entrance of the Germans, having some of their surgeons at Patay and other villages.

During this time a very strange event occurred. The Church of the Madeleine was once more used for Divine worship. The Host was in the shrine, one solitary French National Guard kneeling in the aisle, and a few humble inhabitants. A German soldier let us charitably hope, the worse for wine or brandy—mounted the Altar steps, and was in the act of climbing upon the Altar itself, to desecrate most shamefully the sacred place, when the revolver in his belt caught some projection, turned upwards, one of the barrels was discharged, and the ball lodged so close to his heart, that his death followed instantaneously. General Von Wittich immediately demanded 20,000 francs fine. He could not prove the murderer was that National Guard, nor could he identify him; but he was convinced a French hand had done the deed, and he threatened to bombard the town afresh if the fine was not paid. It could not be raised, and things were looking desperate,

when Arthur Picard, accompanied by one of the Sisters of Mercy nursing in the Irish Ambulance, sought out the General at his quarters, about a mile out of town, to plead for mercy. M. Picard offered to pay down at once 5,000 francs on condition that the body of the dead German was given up to him for examination, that two German surgeons should be present, and that on the result of this examination future proceedings should depend. The General consented; the examination took place. The ball was found; it was the ball of the soldier's own revolver. The General was convinced and the fine remitted; but the 5,000 francs were retained. Such is the tale that has made Arthur Picard's name known in Châteaudun; but of one and all we heard high praise. Their skill, their courage, their unselfish devotion, their kindly sympathy, not only with the sick but the sorrowing, were the theme of every tongue, and that we were friends of theirs was our

sufficient passport. They did splendid service, though no official thanks have ever been given to them. However, two days before we arrived they had left, and only a waggon with 'Ambulance Irlandaise' painted on it, and standing in the yard of a factory, remained to testify of their presence there.

Before dinner we strolled about the town. It was a sad sight of wreck and ruin. The back of our hotel was entirely destroyed, and next door a range of buildings, once a splendid shop, was in ruins. The other side of the Place Royale had escaped better, but the windows were starred with bullet holes. When the Prussians stormed the barricades and entered the town a great deal of random firing took place in the streets, to the destruction of the windows. We heard sad tales from one and all of the terror and distress in the town on that October night; how when the Prussians entered — 'comme des sauvages'—women and children fled down the

steep path that led to the river banks, and so escaped by the Faubourg. The shops were broken open and their contents strewed about the street; sugar, rice, coffee, pieces of silk, muslin, and linen, books, furniture, bacon, butter, cheese, every conceivable article, were heaped together in the streets and trodden under foot. Many inhabitants were utterly ruined, and it will be years, if ever, before Châteaudun recovers the effect of that day's work. The hundred citizens sent away as prisoners passed several months in Germany, and the entire suspension of trade and business had been the consequence.

The next morning, after a walk about the town, we ordered breakfast, and prepared to leave on our return to Orléans. When we went down to the salle-à-manger, we found a very fat, red-faced officer there, who was giving directions for his breakfast in bad French. After him entered two or three others, and they began to eat their cutlets and salad

with good appetites. Just as they had finished the landlady came in, and, addressing the first officer, asked him if he were the General who had sent to command a *déjeuner*. 'Ja,' answered the individual in question. 'Then, Monsieur,' said the good woman, '*your déjeuner* is prepared in the small salle. I apologise that I did not recognise your Excellency.' 'Bring the breakfast here,' replied his Excellency; 'I can eat a second, but I shall not stir from here.' All persuasions were vain, so the second breakfast was brought, and devoured with equal appetite; and the General began to converse. He spoke in German, and was telling the others how, where he had been quartered, he had been called a tyrant; but he only wished he could do twice as much to crush the '*canaille of France*.' As for sparing men, women, and children, it was all nonsense. The Germans should have rule over all, to do as they pleased with them. The rest of the chivalrous

warrior's ideas, as regarded his captives, had best be omitted.

I suppose our faces showed the disgust we felt, for one of the officers tried to silence him, and he said, still in German, looking at us, 'They are brave women to travel about in this country just now.' We resolved to show him that we were not unguarded, and, calling the landlady, I whispered to her to send in Louis, our chief Infirmier, who had accompanied us, telling her why. Louis came in, the very picture of a bright, intelligent French soldier, in the neat dress of the Marine Infantry. He was nearly six feet high, with a bright, blue eye, fair hair, and neatly-trimmed moustache. He stood behind our chairs as Louise and I turned and spoke to him, giving him some directions about the carriage, whilst a sudden silence fell on the noisy group of Germans, and the General let fall his knife and fork, and sat as if thunderstruck. To have a French private, free and happy, travelling about in

their lines, and actually introduced into his august presence, was a fact he could not realise. Louis left, touching his kepi as he went; and the General, drawing a long breath, said emphatically, 'Ach Himmel! but they *are* brave indeed to dare to do *this*!' The rest of his party thoroughly enjoyed the scene, and as for the landlady and the various inhabitants who were lounging about, their delight was excessive, and if it had been possible to give us a French guard of honour out of the town's precincts, I really believe it would have been done, they were so pleased at what they considered the compliment paid to their nation, and in speaking in a friendly manner, before the General, to a French soldier, and showing that we had confidence in his fidelity and good-will to act as our guard. Trifles like these go very far in war time. There are two Generals we met whose lives are not worth an hour's purchase when the next war comes between Prussia and France, and this blustering bully is one of them.

We reached Orléans in safety, and the story, as related by Louis, was the amusement of the Ambulance. One of the Germans told me the General was a well-known man, very harsh to his own men, and probably very cruel to his enemies. Characters vary in all men, but the difference in German officers was extraordinary. I never could account for it, on any settled principle, except that they differed much in themselves at various times, and that often champagne had a great deal more to do with it than natural character. It was an invariable rule with us never to have any conversation with them after 7 P.M.; and though I do not go so far as some people do who say that three parts of the officers in the German army were drunk all day, except during a few hours in the morning, I am quite sure that very many drank very hard, and many things were done in consequence which could not be recalled, and which were bitterly regretted in the cooler judgment of the early morning.

This fact is another proof of the terrible demoralisation of war. These gentlemen were not habitual drunkards, were not wild boys, were, at least many of them, steady-going citizens, fathers of families, and respectable members of society. It may be feared that the habits acquired in this miserable war will cling to them through life, and be handed down to their children; and this fear should be a strong motive to promote peace by every honourable means, so that our own land may, in God's mercy, be spared from the awful scourge of War.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOIRET.

Our last expedition before we left Orléans was to the villages of Artenay, Beaune-le-Rolande, and Lorcy, all the sites of fierce contest. Artenay especially had suffered. It was on the high road to Paris, and round it and in it several conflicts had taken place. Like all other towns in the neighbourhood, it had been full of wounded, and had been heavily oppressed by requisitions. The Curé showed us where a shell had exploded in his garden, and the church had been struck by several. We heard one strange and true thing there. A Tricolor flag was displayed side by side with a Red-Cross one, from the

window of a respectable house which was pointed out to us in the main street, and this had been stolen by some German soldiers, a gilt eagle was fitted upon it, and it was taken away to figure in the triumphal entry to Berlin as a regimental standard. A second instance of this occurred in the same town. So, if a vast number of captured flags are borne through the streets of Berlin, we may fairly entertain some doubt as to their authenticity.

Artenay must always be a very dull little place, and was of course now a very depressed one. We visited the branch house of the St. Aignan Sisterhood. The poor things had but little left. Their bedding was spoiled by the use of the wounded, and their chairs had been burnt for firewood; but they had re-assembled their poor children, and the school was going on as usual. Relief was sadly needed, and some was given by the kindness of two gentlemen we met in the inn, agents

for the distribution of the American fund, to whom we mentioned their case, and we cannot speak too highly of the thorough manner in which these gentlemen discharged their duty, examining personally into the cases, and using their own good judgment, not trusting to the reports of others, or leaving their work to be done second-hand.

The road to Beaune-le-Rolande ran through the forest. We passed over several huge trenches with stakes at the bottom, very nasty if man or horse fell into them. They were bridged now with planks, and it was rather nervous work passing over in a carriage. Various earthbanks had been thrown up amidst the brushwood for riflemen to hide behind, and certainly it would have been impossible for an enemy to pass in face of an opposing force; but unluckily the enemy, in this instance, did not come that way. We stayed at a wayside inn to lunch, and early in the afternoon reached Beaune-le-Rolande. The battle here

had been a very severe one; several houses were destroyed by shell, and several more had been burnt.

We went to the Curé to enquire into the state of the poor, and were surprised, on announcing ourselves as English, to be received with the greatest coldness and suspicion. 'English, are you?' said the Curé; 'then why did you not accompany your Ambulance? They went to Beaugency with the Prussians, they came here with them in the first instance, stayed here a little while, and then went to rejoin them.' 'Very likely,' we said. 'But we do not belong to that Ambulance. They are with the Prussians; but they never worked in Orléans. They sent a messenger to us to know if we had any work for them; but we did not want them, and said No. We are of the Ambulance Anglaise in the Convent of St. Marc, Orléans, under Monseigneur Dupanloup.' This simple explanation changed all. We were requested to

sit down and share what dinner there was. We complained of having been followed and unkindly spoken to as we came, and the Curé said he would explain to the people that we did not belong to the great English Ambulance that had gone with the Prussians. Justly or unjustly, I know not, as we never came across them; but from first to last the War Office Ambulance was considered by the French as merely supplementing the regimental Ambulances of the German army, and they had the same idea that I had been told of in England as being the boast of a Prussian officer—that the assistance given to the Germans enabled them to send 20,000 more men to the front than could otherwise have been spared.

We left Beaune-le-Rolande next day, and by that time the news had been spread that we were not English like the English who had been there, who had lived hand-in-glove with the German officers. They had nursed the wounded certainly, but the fact of intimate

acquaintanceship with the invaders, could not be forgiven by the people. In any future war this rock must be avoided; neutrals should be really neutral. The great Ambulances occupied a prominent place, but their help would have been gladly dispensed with by the French because they were distrusted. It was the case with the Anglo-American at Orléans, popular as it had been at Sedan, and more particularly so during the whole career of the War Office Ambulance; but the experience we gained of practical Ambulance work will be better given hereafter in a separate form.

We drove to Lorcy to see the branch house of our convent there. The Sisters told us of the day when the fighting was near them, and the balls were whistling up the street. The children they taught were all in class, but, as the Sister Superior remarked, 'they could not attend to their lessons,' so the shutters were closed to prevent the balls coming in, and

they tried to amuse the poor little things. Imagine the difficulty of playing a children's game; with shot and shell falling around! They told us a sad tale, too, which we heard confirmed in the villages named. The combat commenced around Lédon on the 24th October, but neither party seems to have gained a decided advantage, and the Prussians encamped at a little distance from Lorcy, which is four miles from Lédon and four miles farther from Orléans.

On the 25th a peasant went to the French commandant at Lédon and told him that there were only a couple of hundred Prussians at Lorcy. Seventeen mounted Chasseurs d'Afrique and three hundred infantry instantly started for that place. The Prussians were there; not two hundred, as the peasant said, but between two and three thousand. The poor French fought with all the courage of despair, fifteen German officers were killed and nearly five hundred men, but at last the

French were obliged to surrender. They were summoned to do so, and to throw down their arms; resistance was hopeless, and they did lay down their arms, and gave themselves up prisoners. Then came a scene which surely is a disgrace to the German name: helpless and disarmed, they were made to kneel down, the poor wounded remnants of that gallant band, a file of Prussian soldiers was marched in front of them, a volley was fired, and all was over. They had dared to fight as brave men should, in an unequal contest, and they paid the penalty with their lives. But the story will never be forgotten by those who saw the execution, and before long the place of their burial will be marked by some memorial of their sad fate.

We drove back through several villages, all showing traces of war, to Châteauneuf. Here we found a very good hotel but lately evacuated by the Germans; and the landlady showed us into a room, apologising for its being not

yet in order, for a mechanic was repairing the locks of the drawers, which had been forced open with their swords by the Prussian officers who had lodged in that room, and everything had been plundered. There had been no resistance in Châteauneuf, and this had been done *since the Armistice.* Whilst our dinner was preparing we tried to get the workman into a chat, but he was exceptionally silent and, as it seemed, sulky. At last he unbent. Our sympathy with the poor people of the district was too evident not to win his confidence, and he told us his tale. It came out in short sentences, with long intervals of silence between. He had been a soldier in early life, and when his time of service expired, became a whitesmith in a village hard by; being married, with one young child, he had not been drawn in the first levies. Many Prussians were quartered on him at one time. They ate and drank all he had. He had not even bread to give his wife and child; but a sergeant, who

saw the state to which they were reduced, insisted on his men sharing their rations with the family. 'We lived like brothers,' said the poor fellow; 'he was a good man, Prussian though he was. I pray God to bless him. It was through him we did not die of starvation.'

He went on to say that he was drawn in the last levy; but before he joined, the second taking of Orléans occurred, and he went back to his ruined home. He found his wife there, and his only child dying. There was nothing to give them; no food, no medicine, no help, for the enemy were all around, and 'at even the child died.' They laid the body decently on the only mattress left them, and covered it with the poor fellow's coat. But that night more Prussians came by, and demanded food, and fire, and lodging. Of the first two there was none, the last was there, but no beds, only that one mattress with its sacred burden. But even this was not respected; the body of the child was flung out into the roadway, and

a Prussian soldier threw himself down upon the mattress. The father took up the corpse of his child, and as he carried it in his arms to the woods hard by, where at least its bed of dry leaves would not attract a Prussian soldier, he swore a deep oath of vengeance, and when the French cross the Rhine (and the day may come, for none can tell what is in the future), that oath will be fearfully kept.

As he took up his basket of tools with a stern, sad, absent air, we looked at his white, fixed face and the pitiless expression round his set lips, and said to each other, 'God forbid we should be Germans in a German village when that man comes by, on his way to Berlin!' He touched his cap gravely, 'Good evening, Mesdames; you are kind, you can feel for us. It was my only child,' and so left the room. *Many* such a tale can be told. The Germans have sown the wind, they will reap the whirlwind; and none know this better than their leaders. France must be

utterly crushed, that the day of vengeance for 1870–71 may never dawn; but she has a power of elasticity left that may defy them yet.

We returned next day to Orléans. A visit to Coulmiers concluded our work in the Loiret. We saw the battle-field where the only real French victory of the war was won which had any important results, for it was after this battle that Orléans was evacuated by the Germans, and the château which had been the head-quarters of Von der Tann. Like all others it had been completely pillaged. We heard here from the peasants who had buried the dead, that the German killed and wounded were that day six to one of the French. Wherever we went this was the case, and during our excursion to Artenay and Beaune we were shown a farm near Artenay, called 'Arblay,' where the Germans had burned their dead, as at Andeglou. We saw where a huge pile of wheat-straw and human remains had

been; the charred relics were still left there. It was in the midst of a courtyard surrounded by farm buildings. It burned for two days, and when the farmer, who had gone into Orléans, returned to his farm to see what he could save, he found smoke and flames ascending from the courtyard, but was prevented from entering it by German sentinels. We heard of several similar cases in various villages. That it was not done from sanitary motives is evident by the fact that very few French were missing; most of those absent from their regiments were accounted for. They were buried on the field, taken into Ambulance, or sent away prisoners; besides, the buttons and scraps of singed clothing found were all German. There is no doubt it was done to conceal their losses, especially as the fact is not recorded, I believe, in any of their medical or military reports, and was indignantly denied by those in our Ambulance, till we produced convincing evidence in portions of the charred remains,

buckles, buttons, and other little proofs of our statement. We have these things still.

Our work was now done, and we prepared to leave; but before concluding this simple relation of our experiences in the war, I will add a few words as to the domestic state of Orléans in that sad time. The inhabitants were well aware that to have soldiers quartered upon them was the fate of war; but they did feel it hard that there were no rules as to what quantity of meat and wine they must be furnished with, and that no complaints of excess ever met with any redress. How hopeless complaint was, may be seen from the fact that a lady presented herself before the Commandant de Place, to request that some orders might be given to the soldiers in her house to conduct themselves with common decency. His answer was, 'Madame, you appear to forget that you are lodging with the Prussians, not the Prussians with you. If you do not like your hosts, you can leave.'

The requisitions for forage made on the villagers were ruinous; not only was sufficient taken to supply the daily wants of the cavalry and train horses, but the demand was only limited by the supply, and all was carried off for future use. The same with stores of wine, flour, potatoes, rice, and groceries. Nothing was left, and too often clothes useless to the soldiery, were cut into ribands, whilst every little ornament was taken to send as a present to some German fair one, and furniture was recklessly burned for firewood.

It was not only the soldiers but the officers who acted with positive dishonesty. There seemed to be an utter demoralisation amongst them. Two instances may here be given. A colonel was quartered in the house of a retired officer of good family in Orléans. He lived with the gentleman and his daughter on the most friendly terms; they gave him up the *salon* for his sleeping apartment, and treated him as an honoured guest. In the *salon* was a secretaire,

locked, and the key in the possession of the old officer. This secretaire contained family papers and some jewels of value. After the departure of the German colonel the officer inspected the secretaire; it was apparently untouched. He opened it; it was empty! The mystery was soon explained; for, by a strange mischance, the colonel had omitted to search his room for anything he had forgotten to pack up, and there, under his mattress, was an instrument for picking locks. A German Catholic chaplain was quartered in the humble presbytery of the Curé of Les Aydes, a suburb of Orléans. Will it be credited, yet it is strictly true, that the reverend gentleman actually robbed his poor host, his brother priest, of all his linen and clothes, and carried away sundry small articles which he found about!

It is a well-known fact that many officers, as well as privates, had with them complete sets of housebreaking instruments, whilst a number of Jews followed the army, under

pretext of selling tobacco, and bought the plunder from the thieves. I doubt if Frenchmen would have condescended to this meanness. The loss of the papers and jewels will form the subject of a suit at Berlin for their restitution, as well as the little bill of 8,000 francs for *extras* which Prince Frederick Charles ran up at Montargis, and forgot to pay. Story after story of this kind could be related. The dishonest propensities of the Germans, their enormous appetites, their love of comfort, and their entire disregard of decency in their habits, will remain impressed on the minds of the French as the leading characteristics of their invaders.

With the coming of peace our Ambulance was broken up—the still uncured men being sent to the hospitals of their depôts, whilst the rest and the Infirmiers rejoined their regiments. The German doctors and Infirmiers left early in March, and Matthias returned to his convent. The 'Wandering Jew' said he

should close the Ambulance. To this we demurred. It had been opened before his coming; it should be continued after his departure. They had all been there on sufferance, and because we were glad of their services; but they could neither open nor close an English Ambulance. M. de Capes sent us in some fresh French wounded from private houses, now cleared of their patients, and the Ambulance remained open till late in April, though we left on the 28th of March. The good Bishop, who in February had been elected a Deputy, was at Versailles, but sent us a warm letter of thanks, which we give in the Appendix. What the state of Orléans was during that wretched winter may be judged from a few statistics. It is a town of 50,000 inhabitants. Over 50,000 troops were quartered there at intervals, for two or three days at a time, whilst the permanent garrison was 10,000 men; but the passing and repassing of large bodies of soldiers often swelled this num-

ber, and during the months of December and January there were more than 30,000 wounded in the city, the majority Germans. There were 350 Ambulances in private houses, none with less than six men in them, many with 20 or 30, and besides these, every barrack and public building, every convent and manufactory, were converted into hospitals. Four hundred Sisters of various orders were employed nursing the wounded, besides a staff of ladies of Orléans, and some Protestant Deaconesses with the Hessian *corps d'armée*. In the large buildings from 200 to 400 wounded were received at one time. The Évêché, three churches, the college, the seminary, were all Ambulances. The Hôtel-Dieu and the Caserne St.-Charles were reserved for small-pox cases, of which there were 4,000 *at one time* during the winter, including civilians. Typhus and scarlet fever were also terribly prevalent.

Several German papers unblushingly propagated the falsehood that the German wounded

were ill treated, even mutilated, in the Ambulances of Orléans. This was positively and indignantly denied in a letter from the German General in command. The chief medical Inspector bore witness that 'in no place were the German wounded so well treated.' One German officer told the Bishop that he felt such false assertions dishonoured his country. Another wrote to Monseigneur Dupanloup, 'We cannot go on making war as we are doing now.' A most emphatic denial was given in a letter published by the Bishop. Hardly treated as were the people of Orléans, no single act of unkindness, far less cruelty, has been proved against any one of them. And yet they *were* hardly treated. It was said by the Commandant de Place that a quarrel had taken place in a very low house, between a German soldier and a citizen of Orléans, and that the soldier had been stabbed. Prince Frederick Charles imposed a fine of 600,000 francs on the city for this murder.

The authorities offered to prove that no such event had taken place, and requested an inquest on the body. The body was never produced, and all enquiry into the matter refused. There was not one word of truth in the statement, but the fine had to be paid, and the transaction left a feeling of uncertainty as to the probability of the proceeding being repeated whenever Prince Frederick Charles fell short of ready money. He was the most unpopular of all the German commanders, and women used the name of the Red Prince to frighten their rebellious children. He was decidedly the Ogre of the War, but as we never received from himself and his staff anything but kindness and good-will, it would be a very ungracious act on our parts to repeat the many tales we heard to his disadvantage.

Besides money, perpetual requisitions were made in kind. Once, leather enough for 100,000 pair of half-boots! or money to the same value. Nothing could be more

crushed and miserable than the population of this town under the Prussian rule, and the harshness had its usual recoil—the victims had resort to a system of deceit, for self-preservation, in itself destructive of all fair dealing. To cheat a German was a justifiable, nay, further, a praiseworthy act, and the old example of 'spoiling the Egyptians' was quoted in proof of its having the sanction of Scripture; but here and there a singular trait of honesty cropped up. I met a peasant woman in a bookseller's shop, buying a German grammar of the most puzzling description. 'Why do you buy that?' I asked; 'why not have one of these simple phrase-books? They give you all necessary to know when soldiers are quartered in your house.' 'Madame,' she replied gravely, 'that is not what I want. I have a little boy of eight years old. I must teach him German.' 'But why?' I asked. 'Because, Madame, the Prussians have stolen everything I had in the world, and when our

soldiers go to Berlin, my boy may be old enough to go with them, and then (as I am honest,) I should wish him to take from some poor place like ours, only *just* what they took from us; so he must know German well.'

This cool, determined spirit of revenge will be more dangerous to the peace of Europe, in future years, cultivated as it is in the rising generation, than all the passionate threats of the present one. The French of twenty years hence may be a sadder and a wiser people. Taught by the follies, the madness, and the misfortunes, of the France of the Second Empire, they may avoid the errors which brought about the ruin of their country; but one thing they will never learn—to forgive the Germans. One of the Grand Vicars said to us, 'Yes, it is true we hated the English nation as a nation, though we loved and esteemed individuals; but we have changed our hatred now, and Waterloo is forgotten

in Sedan.' It has become a sacred duty to detest the Prussians, and to train up the young in this spirit. Even the priests share in this feeling, and look forward, and lead their flocks to do so too, to the time when victory on the other shore of the Rhine, shall efface the disgrace and humiliation of this war.

It must be confessed, too, that the insolent manner of the Germans, their boasts and threats, stimulated this evil feeling. The noblest and the gentlest natures were stung by it into deep resentment. One of the Abbés in Orléans is a man renowned for the sanctity of his life and the eloquence of his preaching. He is the head of a college for junior boys, intended for the Grand Séminaire. He himself told me that on one occasion, accompanied by a servant, he went to the forest, to cut wood for the fires in his house, which he had made into an Ambulance. At the entrance of the wood he met a young German officer, who

stopped and insulted him in the grossest way. The Abbé turned to him, saying in German, 'You ought to be more courteous, sir, to a fallen foe. You are the victors now; but the day may come when we, in our turn, shall stand in the position you hold now, lords of an invaded country. You have taught us lessons we shall not forget. From the seed you have sown, a bitter harvest shall be reaped. Yes, sir, in ten years' time, I shall accompany our army across the Rhine. *I myself*—and why? To plead with the avengers, for your wives and your children, to save your homes from fire and pillage, to tell our soldiers that the noblest revenge will then be to show how victories can be won, and yet the laws of God and man be respected.' The German turned sulkily away, saying, 'Don't trouble yourself, old gentleman; I shall never live to see that.' 'No, you will not,' answered the Abbé; 'you will leave your bones here in France, to fertilise the soil you have invaded. I shall go

to tell your countrymen how the graves of those who sleep in France are respected, even by their enemies!' and raising his hat, he walked off. The officer died, and was buried in Orléans about a month afterwards.

Many a time it has been difficult for us to suppress our feelings of indignation, at being told by Prussian officers, that they all looked forward to the day when they should invade and conquer England ; that it was a thing arranged already, when Holland and Belgium were added to the German Empire, and that the quarrel would begin about Heligoland. They did not speak of our nation with the insolent contempt with which they treated the French, but with an amount of jealousy and hatred that they could not conceal. They told us, too, that the wonderful system of espionage which had been carried on for years in France was being practised in England. It is a fact that they had plans of every house and garden in Orléans, even of the convent

where we were, and knew the way up the path and through the paddock to Ste.-Maire, before they had seen it in reality. A party of Uhlans entered a brewer's office in Orléans. He gave them beer; but one, raising his helmet, said, 'Don't you know me, Monsieur? Give us some of the good beer in cellar five.' It was his head clerk, who had left about two years ago!

For five years a shepherd lived in a small farmhouse close by one of the great forts near Paris. There he kept the sheep, and led the hard life of a peasant. It was an engineer officer who in this disguise took maps of the fort and the country around. Instance after instance could be adduced of men who had passed years as clerks, servants, and tutors in various families, coming back to the places where they had resided at the head of the Uhlans, sent on before the main body of the army. No wonder the French desire to expel every German from their land. It

would be well if England would make sure, that in her peaceful homes, in her busy warehouses, in farmhouse or lordly hall, she is not nursing vipers that may turn round and sting her. We heard and knew so much of this system and its terrible results that we never hear of German servants, or even governesses, without a fear that their master's secrets are being recorded at Berlin—the amount of his property and the value of his plate.

But it is time to conclude this simple sketch of our life in an invaded country. A few passing remarks I would make as regards ourselves personally. We had to lament the death in our Ambulance at Ste.-Marie of the young German student I named as Dr. Kröner's assistant. He caught the small-pox, and died of it, after an illness of four days. He received from Mère St.-Joseph and her Sisters the kindest and tenderest of nursing, and was buried with military honours only a few days before

the peace was signed. With the coming in of peace we received our letters and papers, and found Dr. Pratt had not sent his promised apology to the 'Times.' He called at our request, and promised to do it. He left next day for Paris, and it has remained undone; but the full and truthful statement we have made will quite explain the state of the case as it stands between ourselves and the National Committee, and we leave the verdict to the justice of our countrymen and women. If only the National Society *had* aided us out of their ample resources, we might, indeed, have done in Orléans a work that would have made their names honoured not only in the city, but throughout France itself. As it is, the deep gratitude and the public thanks which have been bestowed upon us are given to ourselves alone; but as Englishwomen we feel that we share those thanks with all who bear the English name. Many gave us substantial aid, many more, true sympathy and hearty prayers for

our welfare; and much of our safety and success was, under Providence, owing to the Union-Jack that floated bravely over our Convent home.

Our tale has been a sad yet a true one. We saw the *domestic* horrors of war, and turned in sadness from its so-called glories. We looked on happy homes, ruined and desolated, on the fair land of France laid waste, and we heard the mourning and lamentation for the dear ones fallen in fight, or led away captives to a strange land. But we sorrowed most of all, over the demoralisation of character in two great nations—a demoralisation which has stamped its ineffaceable brand on the men who fought in the campaigns of 1870–71, and which will be handed down to the next generation: the brand of licentiousness, brutality, dishonesty, untruthfulness, hatred, and revenge. May God in His mercy save England from things like these, for He alone can guard us in the hour of danger,

national or personal. We trust and believe that when the storm-clouds are gathering as now around us, 'The Lord shall give strength to His people: the Lord shall give His people the blessing of peace.'

APPENDIX.

We have annexed the letter received from the Bishop of Orléans, Monseigneur Dupanloup, and another, from a French Noble resident there, together with the article inserted in the 'Episcopal Annals.' To this is added the formal letter of thanks, sent by the President and Physicians of the Hôtel-Dieu, to which we gave what remained of our stores on leaving, and another extract from a letter received from a *sous-officier* of artillery, who had been nursed in the Ambulance, as a specimen of those we are constantly receiving from the grateful and affectionate French.

Versailles, 3 avril 1871.

Mesdemoiselles,

Je regrette extrêmement de ne pas me trouver à Orléans, au moment de votre départ. Je veux au moins vous exprimer de loin toute ma reconnaissance, pour les bons soins que vous avez prodigués à nos pauvres blessés, et pour la géné-

reuse affection que vous témoignez à nos bonnes sœurs de St.-Aignan. Je les recommande de nouveau à toute votre charité, pendant leur voyage en Angleterre. Je n'oublierai jamais les bienfaits de votre séjour à Orléans, et par mes prières du moins je tâcherai d'acquitter la dette de ma reconnaissance.

Veuillez agréer, Mesdemoiselles, tous mes bien dévoués et respectueux hommages.

✠ FÉLIX, ÉVÊQUE D'ORLÉANS.

À Mesdemoiselles Péarson
et MacLaughlin.

Orléans, le 1er avril 1871.[1]

MONSIEUR LE RÉDACTEUR,

Voudriez-vous avoir l'obligeance d'insérer, dans les *Annales religieuses*, la lettre suivante :

Nous avons bien le droit de nous réjouir de ce que l'ennemi ne foule plus nos belles contrées du Loiret, qu'il a à peu près ruinées entièrement, mais nous serions ingrats si nous ne payions pas un tribut de regrets, au départ de deux nobles femmes de l'Angleterre qui viennent de passer cinq mois à Orléans, où elles se sont occupées constamment à adoucir nos plus grands maux, par des aumônes comme savent en faire les cœurs généreux avec les ressources de la fortune.

Mesdemoiselles Péarson et MacLaughlin, venant

[1] *Annales religieuses et littéraires de la ville et du diocèse d'Orléans.* April 8, 1871. Vol. xi. No. 2.

de Sédan où elles ont rempli les mêmes œuvres de charité, sont arrivées à Orléans, peu après la première occupation de la ville par les Prussiens. Elles ont demandé l'hospitalité à une communauté religieuse, à la maison mère des sœurs de Saint-Aignan, déjà encombrée de blessés de nos premiers combats. Elles arborent aussitôt le drapeau de leur pays, à côté du nôtre qui flotte sur les murs de l'établissement, et de la Croix de Genève qui distinguait une ambulance, et vite elles partagent leur temps à panser les blessés avec les sœurs si dévouées de Saint-Aignan, et à rechercher dans la ville les plus grands besoins pour les secourir.

Mesdemoiselles Péarson et MacLaughlin croyaient bien, comme nous, que nous n'aurions à réparer que les désastres de l'invasion d'octobre, mais ces désastres, hélas! n'étaient que le prélude de plus grands malheurs. Le 4 décembre nous recevions 100,000 Prussiens, exaspérés par dix jours de combats, et exaltés par l'orgueil de dix victoires. Mais tandis que les Allemands célébraient leur entrée dans notre ville par le pillage de tous les magasins, il nous fallait songer à nos blessés qui gémissaient sur les champs de bataille, ou dans des ambulances improvisées dans des villages ruinés, ou dans des fermes isolées à demi détruites. Inutile de rappeler que pour cette lugubre besogne, tout le monde à Orléans a fait son devoir, mais

nous tenons à dire qu'au premier rang de ceux qui, le lendemain de nos défaites, parcoururent les plaines sanglantes de Cercottes, de Chevilly, d'Artenay, pour y recueillir nos morts et nos blessés, nous avons remarqué nos deux sœurs de charité de la Grande-Bretagne.

Je les ai vues plusieurs fois charger elles-mêmes dans leur voiture les plus mutilés, qu'elles amenaient à l'ambulance de Saint-Aignan, où elles s'étaient réservé le soin particulier d'une des salles. Je les ai vues dans les maisons éparses des rives de la forêt d'Orléans porter des consolations et des secours à des amputés qu'on ne pouvait encore transporter ailleurs.

Le digne curé de Cercottes pourrait dire que le lendemain de la bataille qui fit de son élégant village une ruine complète, et au moment où il pleurait sur cinquante cadavres entassés près d'une fosse qu'il leur avait creusée, et sur les infortunes de ses paroissiens, que les boulets et les obus avaient tous faits fuir dans les bois, Mesdemoiselles Péarson et MacLaughlin furent les premières qui lui portèrent des secours qu'elles ont renouvelés plus tard.

Occupées ensuite à leur ambulance chez les sœurs, nos deux infatigables bienfaitrices distribuèrent encore en ville de nombreuses aumônes pendant tout l'hiver. Puis quand Paris est dé-

bloqué, quand les routes d'Orléans sont rendues aux Français, et que des pauvres servantes et des familles sans ressources doivent retourner chez leurs anciens maîtres et à leurs travaux dans la capitale et ailleurs, Mesdemoiselles Péarson et Mac Laughlin pourvoient à tous les frais du voyage. J'ai été heureux de remettre de leur part à un certain nombre cette précieuse et si nécessaire aumône.

Enfin, puisque je ne puis tout dire, car il me faudrait faire un volume, je termine en ajoutant que nos charitables et compatissantes Anglaises ont employé les dernières semaines de leur séjour parmi nous à visiter de nouveau les divers théâtres de nos combats autour d'Orléans dans le but de laisser aux familles les plus éprouvées par la guerre et les plus malheureuses la dernière obole de leur riche provision.

Puisse ce faible témoignage de notre gratitude aller les trouver jusqu'à Londres, au sein de leurs familles chéries, et leur redire, qu'à Orléans leur nom est béni et qu'au ciel leur charité aura sa récompense !

J'aurais voulu qu'une plume mieux exercée que la mienne à écrire dans vos colonnes eût retracé ces belles actions ; mais remplissant provisoirement, depuis le commencement de la guerre, les fonctions de premier aumônier dans la commu-

nauté de Saint-Aignan, j'ai été à même de suivre de près les faits que je raconte. J'ai cru que ces faits, d'ailleurs, étaient d'eux-mêmes assez éloquents pour intéresser vos lecteurs.

Agréez, Monsieur le rédacteur, etc.

GUÉRIN, des Prêtres de la Société de la Miséricorde.

Orléans, 23 avril 1871.

MESDEMOISELLES,

Je vous ai adressé hier par la poste le journal *l'Impartial du Loiret*, reproduisant la lettre du père Guérin, si vraie et si méritée pour l'admirable dévouement dont vous n'avez cessé de faire preuve pendant six mois, tant à Orléans que sur le champ de bataille de notre contrée, et pour soulager autour de vous tant de misères qui faisaient gémir nos cœurs Orléanais. J'ai été heureux et j'ai saisi avec empressement cette circonstance de faire donner la plus grande publicité à tous ces faits, qui méritent pour vous, Mesdemoiselles, et pour la Grande-Bretagne, notre profonde reconnaissance.

Votre, etc.,

VICOMTE D'O——.

Orléans, 17 mars 1871.

Les Membres composant la Commission administrative des Hospices civils d'Orléans, à Mesdames Emma Pearson et Louise MacLaughlin.

MESDAMES,

Vous avez très-gracieusement et très-généreusement offert à nos hospices une certaine quantité de médicaments, appareils, instruments, charpie et autres objets, provenant de l'Ambulance dirigée par vos soins.

L'œuvre à laquelle vous vous êtes dévouées avec autant de zèle que de charité, et le don particulier dont nos établissements recueillent le bénéfice, font le plus grand honneur, Mesdames, à vos sentiments de bienfaisance et d'humanité, et laisseront parmi nous les plus sympathiques souvenirs.

Veuillez donc recevoir, Mesdames, avec les remercîments que nous sommes heureux de vous adresser, l'assurance de notre reconnaissance et de notre respectueuse considération.

F. TILNEAU.
DE SOUBEZ.
LEVEAU.
MACHARD GRAMMONT.

Bagnères de Luchon, le 24 avril 1871.

BIEN CHÈRES DEMOISELLES,

Vous allez peut-être me traiter de négligent au sujet de ce que je ne vous ai pas donné plus tôt de mes nouvelles, comme je vous l'avais promis lors de mon départ d'Orléans, et peut-être vous serez-vous servi de ce motif, pour croire que je ne pense déjà plus à vous. Que cette pensée ne vienne jamais se loger dans vos mémoires! Car, Mesdemoiselles, tant que le bon Dieu me conservera sur cette terre, je n'oublierai jamais les bons soins empressés que vous n'avez cessé de me prodiguer pendant mon séjour à l'Ambulance d'Orléans, où, grâce à Dieu, vous avez toujours rendu dés services considérables, par votre zèle et votre dévouement pour les malades à qui vous ne manquiez de venir nous apporter toutes sortes de distractions, en fait de livres, tabac, papier à cigarrettes, et en général du linge, etc. etc. Ainsi mille fois merci. . . . .

Votre ami dévoué,

F. BLANC,

Maréchal-des-logis au 12e régiment d'artillerie.

THE END.

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